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# **ELECTRO-EXOTIC**

Transcultural display and narrative in sub-cultural new  
media

Faculty of Social Sciences

MA Thesis

March 2020

# ABSTRACT

Nicholas Trethowan: Electro-exotic: Transcultural display and narrative in sub-cultural new media  
MA Thesis  
Tampere University  
Master's Degree in Cultural Studies  
March 2020

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As the technological affordances and affordability of digital music sampling have continued to proliferate, so too have its aesthetics and semiotics along with the variety and orientations of its practitioners. With reference to such contexts and discourses as electro-acoustic technique, commodification of music, ethnography, sampling ethics and Orientalism, the present paper subjects *Tanzania*, a 2015 independent music release by the French artist Kink Gong, to multi-modal discursive analysis. *Tanzania* consists almost entirely of electro-acoustically remixed field recordings, made by the artist, of the music and speech of Hadza bushpeople.

The three research aims of the study are to form an understanding of the aesthetics, meanings, ethics and problematics of the work, to contextualise critically this understanding using current theories and discussions of new media and cultural display, and to develop an improved understanding of the considerations pertinent to the ethical practice of transcultural sampling. These aims are fulfilled by identifying the varieties and semiotics of sampling practice in *Tanzania* and by discussing its narrative engagement with issues of power, agency, and the identification and display of cultures.

The chief conclusions of the study are that by embracing fantastical elements, *Tanzania* declines to display or describe real Hadza. In so doing, it subverts both traditional ethnography and world music commodification. Instead, the artist attempts to reimagine the specific historical event of his encounter with Hadza people as an undescriptive fantasy. Thus, the album navigates between the problematic poles of mere signification (general) and essentialist description (specific). It faces some trouble on both counts and, at its worst, seems to essentialise Hadza as instruments for the artist's experience. At perhaps its best, the album gestures by way of its extraordinary sonics towards a transcendent cultural experience and towards a self-reflective methodology for sampling practice.

Key words: digital sampling, exotica, semiotics, new media, RAK, Kink Gong

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

## Contents

<b>Chapter 1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 The poetics of improbable soundscapes .....	5
1.2 Research aims, research questions and overview .....	12
1.2.1 Research aims .....	12
1.2.2 Research questions .....	12
1.2.3 Overview .....	12
<b>Chapter 2: Theory and background .....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 Theories of sampling .....	14
2.1.1 Instance .....	15
2.1.2 Representation.....	16
2.1.3 Nomad.....	19
2.2 Cultural display .....	22
2.2.1 Cultural exploitation .....	22
2.2.2 Transculturation .....	23
2.2.3 Post-modern ethnography .....	25
2.3 Commodification.....	28
2.3.1 Musical commodities .....	28
2.3.2 Authenticity and hybridity .....	32
2.3.3 Orientalism and experimental music.....	35
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology.....</b>	<b>39</b>
3.1 Material analysed and methodology.....	39
3.1.1 Material analysed .....	39
3.1.2 Justification of material analysed.....	40
3.2 Methods .....	43
3.2.1 Referenzanalysekatalog .....	43
3.2.2 Multi-modal critical discourse studies (MCDS) .....	45
3.2.3 RAK and MCDS applied to Kink Gong .....	47
3.2.4 Reliability, validity and limitations.....	49
<b>Chapter 4: Analysis, discussion and synthesis .....</b>	<b>50</b>
4.1 <i>Tanzania</i> .....	50
4.1.1 Analytical focus .....	50
4.1.2 Sampling .....	54
4.1.3 Aesthetical remix strategies .....	55

4.1.4	Symbolic processing strategies .....	59
4.1.5	Habitus and commodification .....	64
4.1.6	Legal and ethical matters .....	67
4.2	Conclusions .....	68
4.2.1	RQ1 .....	68
4.2.2	RQ2 .....	69
4.2.3	Further remarks .....	71
<b>Chapter 5: Bibliography.....</b>		<b>73</b>

## Figures

<b>Figure 1</b>	Tanzania cover photograph by James Stephenson (Discrepant 2015) .....	40
<b>Figure 2</b>	Interplay of original musical activity throughout <i>Tanzania</i> .....	41

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 The poetics of improbable soundscapes

A high-pitched, reversed, synthesised warble far in the right channel. Fragmentary and unidentifiable, it stops short as abruptly as it began; now a deep voice takes its place far to the left, an exclamation in the Hadza language. More synthesised fragments tremble unobtrusively beneath it. A second voice joins in the right channel, as does a stuttering loop buffer, the improbable union of synthesised and vocal sounds becoming momentarily busier. These are what greet listeners in the initial seconds of ‘Shitani’, the first track of Kink Gong’s 2015 album *Tanzania*. The album finds the French artist, whose real name is Laurent Jeanneau, recombining field recordings to create dynamic, pseudo-organic soundscapes of intact human voices interacting with electro-acoustically transformed texture. Even within an ever more specialised musical underground, the music of Kink Gong remains an unusual realisation of sample-based experimentation. The historicity of Jeanneau’s samples is uncommoner still, for the field recordings from which they derive are his own. His many years spent living, travelling and recording vernacular music around China and South East Asia led British contemporary music magazine *The Wire* to term him a “digital nomad” (Barker, 2015, p. 14). His many accumulated recordings document musical traditions, especially of remote communities throughout the Zomia of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. Some of these communities have disappeared in the years following Jeanneau’s visits, leaving his among the very few (if not only) recordings of their music (Rusu, 2018). In 2014, Jeanneau relocated to Berlin (Rusu, 2018), where he remains based at time of writing.

The remixing of samples into soundscapes, as found on *Tanzania*, is a secondary outlet for the Kink Gong project. The first is to distribute Jeanneau’s field recordings unaltered. As of March 2018, his collection comprises almost two hundred volumes (Rusu, 2018). These are available on CD-R and DVD formats, priced both for private individuals and for institutions, via Jeanneau’s personal website. More recently, the recordings have become available as digital downloads through his Bandcamp page.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bandcamp is a popular online marketplace platform enabling private individuals to sell music and related merchandise in various formats to customers, usually via the private money transfer intermediary PayPal.

## Introduction

Although Jeanneau often includes liner notes that explain or otherwise contextualise the music as far as his knowledge permits, and despite flirtation with the narrative urgency of musical cultures’ “fast disappearing”, he admits that “the very first and essential impulse is not to pretend to do that work of preserving” (Cardoso, 2016, p. 321). Dismissing ethno-linguistic categories as “meaningless to me” (2016, p. 322), Jeanneau claims to be motivated instead by a desire to “[give] a different aesthetic codification of music a chance to be heard” – not least by himself as someone actively immersed in an “ongoing process of being fed with new things” (2016, p. 321). He displays a desire to make available to a general audience – at the expense of, for instance, academic rigour – the music of globally obscure ethnic minorities.

In place of Jeanneau’s real name, the Kink Gong alias appears more often in the mode that produced *Tanzania*, that is, a creative outlet. Here he edits and rearranges samples of his field recordings (occasionally in combination with original performances of his own) into electro-acoustic compositions and soundscapes. Several such works, including *Tanzania*, have been released on the UK-based independent exotica label Discrepant. I understand the nebulous term exotica as a fantastical indulgence in signifiers of artistic otherness, specifically from the perspective of the western non-native. To some extent, this music associates with the historical trajectories of electro-acoustic and tape music. The origins of electro-acoustic music lie in the 1940s with the Pierres Schaeffer and Henry in western Europe and Halim El-Dabh in Egypt (Veal, 2016, pp. 101-102). Kink Gong albums partially echo the works of these composers when seeming to treat field recordings as malleable sonic material, as a substance subject to novel manipulations and, crucially, showing little to no dependency upon the context of its original creation. Nevertheless, only some of Kink Gong’s musical layers are so radically transformed as to portray sounds altogether without obvious causes (the *raison d’être* of *musique concrète*). With Kink Gong, unidentifiable textures combine with more straightforward sampling techniques, such as instrumental sampling and, perhaps most notably, the preserving of intelligible voices. Presumably, this betrays a layered semiotic project. Kink Gong is thus more of an inter-textual and post-modern pursuit, a producer of what Thomas Burkhalter (2016) calls *new media*, than a dry study of sonic aesthetics.

Jeanneau’s plain, low-cost lifestyle of wandering from village to village, and of making and distributing his amateur recordings with a subversive, non-commercial, non-nonsense aura, associate him with what Veal and Kim (2016) call punk ethnography. This is more or less ethnographic practice (the documentation, translation, contextualisation and citation of cultural

## Introduction

materials) controversially undertaken from perspectives of punk culture. For instance, punk ethnographers may present their material with irreverence, rhetorical irony, outrageousness, amateurism or anti-homogeneity (that is, overt opposition to cultural uniformity). Veal and Kim's most prominent example and case study is Sublime Frequencies, an independent collective and music imprint based in Seattle in the US, who happen to have published several volumes of Laurent Jeanneau's field recordings. Veal and Kim consider Sublime Frequencies representative of "a refreshing, at times provocative, and ultimately necessary *critique of established ethnographic practices*" (Veal, 2016, p. 10, emphasis added). This refers to the challenge of Sublime Frequencies to what they see as the academic insularity of ethnomusicology. "Academics have a responsibility as society's paid thinkers", explains Veal, "but too often seem only interested in talking to each other" (2016, p. 11). In other words, insularity restricts the movement of knowledge from academic institutions (including the direct voices of ethnographic subjects themselves) into public awareness. Where this knowledge happens to pertain to music from artists and cultures at best under-represented in the mainstream western culture industry, such collectives as Sublime Frequencies present themselves as actively opposing hegemonic injustice. In making obscure musical documents "accessible to listeners who ... fall outside the traditional audience categories for world music" (2016, p. 11), Sublime Frequencies attempt to subvert the exclusivity and stifling of musical discourse surrounding such music. Moreover, they challenge the western commercial hegemony of world music signification. On their home page, Sublime Frequencies present themselves as

a collective of explorers dedicated to *acquiring and exposing* obscure sights and sounds from modern and traditional urban and rural frontiers via ... forms of human and natural expression *not documented sufficiently* through all channels of *academic research, the modern recording industry, media, or corporate foundations* (About - SublimeFrequencies, n.d., emphasis added).

This statement offers some insight into the ideological orientation and ethical priorities of Sublime Frequencies. For instance, strongly implied is the conviction that recording or otherwise appropriating (acquiring) as well as pressing and distributing (exposing) vernacular and obscure music, in the manner that Sublime Frequencies do so, is justifiable. This is to say that it can, for example, withstand anxious (post-colonial) critique about the appropriation and representation of cultural material. The statement implies that, in part, this justifiability arises out of neglect, disinterest or even deliberate suppression on the part of academic institutions,

## Introduction

the modern music industry, and the prevailing commercial media environment in general. In other words, although the music and its creators deserve the attention of listeners in the west, they are unlikely to receive it through any mainstream channels. Also apparent is the perhaps crucial assertion that, if it falls to low-budget, musically adventurous punks to do the work of distributing such material, they will not allow remunerative inconsistencies or accusations of careless Orientalism (see section 2.3.3) to interrupt the project.

The role of remuneration in critical studies of cultural appropriation, especially regarding sample-based music, has interested me ever since reading Steven Feld's (2000a) well-known *Public Culture* essay 'A Sweet Lullaby for World Music'. Feld concentrates on the remarkable and problematic journey of a sampled recording from North Malaita, the Solomon Islands, by ethnomusicologist Hugo Zemp. The recording is of a lullaby in the Baego language. It emerged from the relative obscurity of a UNESCO catalogue after the French duo Deep Forest sampled it for use as the basis of a dance track. This early 1990s track, which they titled 'Sweet Lullaby', was a commercial success. However, as Feld carefully documents, it appears that neither Deep Forest nor their managers ever acknowledged any obligation or desire to compensate the original singer of the lullaby (a woman named Afunakwa), or at least the community of Malaita, for the use of Zemp's recording.<sup>2</sup> 'Sweet Lullaby' – and thereby Afunakwa's voice – was among material lucratively licensed by Deep Forest for use in TV marketing by companies as substantial as Coca-Cola and Sony (2000a, p. 156). Such conspicuous remunerative neglect may be illustrative of how artists perceive those recorded in their reference material. Feld supposes that, as creators of sample-based music, Deep Forest regarded Afunakwa not as a person but as a sound – as a resource useful for its melodic beauty and, more importantly, its evocation of exotic primitiveness (2000a, p. 165). So reduced to signification, those sampled in such recordings as 'Sweet Lullaby' are no longer representations of specific individuals or cultures. Is it ethically acceptable narratively to manipulate cultural material in this way? This is among the questions that initially motivated the present research.

Another motivating question concerns remuneration. Although mere signification is hardly a role limited in musical production to cultural others, for instance, it is doubtful that any present artist personnel so reduced would judge the role unworthy of financial compensation. In this way, compensatory status perhaps proves a symptom of what Feld calls "globalization's uneven naturalization" (2000a, p. 165), which is to say its historical tendency

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<sup>2</sup> For that matter, neither UNESCO nor Zemp himself ever authorised the use by Deep Forest of his Solomon Islands recordings (Feld, 2000a, pp. 154-158).



## Introduction

exploitatively to distribute power and agency unequally across cultures and identities. This is why Feld and others (cf. Hesmondhalgh, 2006) have devoted energy to remuneration: it is one way of examining the realisation of ideology in terms of quantifiable action – the measurable distribution of financial resources. The implication is that, had Deep Forest made a substantial effort to reinvest any proceeds from ‘Sweet Lullaby’ into supporting or empowering people of Malaita, their reductive, generalising use of cultural signifiers might have proven easier to stomach. At the very least, it expresses some level of concern or respect with measurable material consequences.

John Hutnyk (2000) criticises celebratory narratives and theorisations of culturally hybrid music (such as those that frame the discography of Deep Forest) when they go uninterrupted, or at least inadequately supplanted, by political action. Without such action, he claims, they only reinforce the global capitalist status quo (2000, p. 49) – the uneven naturalisation of globalisation. As money talks, material compensation at least offers artists one straightforward option to take some degree of comprehensible action. Indeed, Alan Bishop of Sublime Frequencies has troubled to compensate artists represented by the platform; however, when this has not been possible Bishop has “decided the sounds were fair game” (Novak, 2017, p. 35). This scenario raises questions of how remunerative inconsistency or impossibility might affect the punkish, low-budget sampling practice of artists such as Kink Gong. To what extent would the unavailability of remuneration vindicate certain of the artistic liberties of sampling? After all, many musicians who practise sampling do so more as musical hobbyists than as musical careerists; for many of us, money does not figure into the process. When there is little or nothing with which to offer material compensation, what political action is instead available to artists? A critical analysis of the use of samples by Kink Gong would have to assess how this use is served, vindicated, or otherwise discussed by narratives of minimal (if any) remuneration and of political action.

Throughout the present paper, I refer often to sampling as *sampling practice*. This is to emphasise sampling as action, occurring within a context of musical creation; occasionally, this context is one marked by spontaneity. It is unnecessary to ascribe narrative function to every instance of sampling practice. A sample may be merely a groove or texture that proved, in isolation or in combination with new materials, attractive, irresistible or simply available to hand. It is to this situated, flowing experience of sampling that Behr, Negus and Street (2017) partly refer when they describe what they call the sampling continuum. This is a ‘post-

## Introduction

sampling' field of "musical choices *and* the means by which they are enacted", where sampling "affects how people listen to what they are producing" (2017, pp. 234-236, emphasis in original) and creative impulses ("the needs of the song, professional pride and creative ethics" [2017, p. 237]) strongly affect sample selection and use. In such a cultural environment, the scope of sampling obviously exceeds mere quotation or dry representation, which is why Behr, Negus and Street consider the term *post-sampling*. Yet, at the same time, acknowledging creative impulses exposes the potential of sampling practice to prioritise feeling and intuition over full consideration of, for instance, narrative communication for multiple perspectives across multiple contextualities. "[O]ur new works [of sampling]", supposes the sociologist Gabór Vályi, "will appear problematic in unforeseen ways in the future" (Vályi, 2011, p. 234). For those such as Vályi or the anthropologist Michael F. Brown (2003), the best outcome possible is one of considerate and sensitive negotiation. Vályi recommends that artists endeavour to locate the musicians they sample, or their heirs, and "[talk] through the issues" (2011, p. 233), which is to say reach a decision on the use of the appropriated material by way of sensitive engagement and discussion with those affected by such use. Should locating such people prove prohibitively difficult or impossible, such as owing to sheer obscurity, Vályi takes a similar stand to that of Alan Bishop, implying that such "banal reasons" ought not prevent the publication of a piece of music (Vályi, 2011, p. 233). A good reason not to publish such music would instead be a negative response from the current representatives of the sampled material; for Vályi, it is the attempt to negotiate, in effect giving representatives of the sample agency in the sampling process, that proves a step of crucial import and respect.

The need for negotiation proposed by Vályi helps to emphasise that certain principles or rules of conduct for sampling or other occasions of cultural display ought to be flexible enough to respond to contextuality. The project of this paper is to examine the use of sampling by Laurent Jeanneau throughout the release *Tanzania*, to interpret and extrapolate the semiotic role of its sampling, and to discuss the relationship between the meanings of its samples and the contextuality of their production. I have selected *Tanzania* as a research object owing to the unusual nature and distribution of its compositional and narrative features. It presents a distinctive methodology of reworking what closely resemble ethnographic field recordings to combine and recontextualise unaltered signifiers with new reconstructions. Moreover, its creator and producer, Laurent Jeanneau, was present and responsible for the original recordings and does not neglect narratives of authenticity or self-reflectivity in discussions of his artistic practice. I proceeded with the present research on the presumption of its producing knowledge

## Introduction

not only of certain creative sampling techniques but also of the positioning of such techniques within discourses of the controversial display of ethnic minorities by western sampling artists. To rephrase this as a question, how should the appropriation of other cultural materials be approached in ethical practice by sampling artists? What ethical considerations should be expected of sampling artists, especially of those operating without substantial financial returns? What does commodification, now virtually an essential factor in modern western musical production, *do* to entities represented by samples even when actual market exchange never occurs? Being someone who identifies strongly as an amateur musician, practitioner of sampling, and generally who is increasingly aware of and concerned by the power dynamics and agency of samples, I was enthusiastic to consider these questions.

The subject of digital sampling practice as a cultural phenomenon is complicated; it is possible to discuss sampling with reference to discourses as diverse as technology, representation, communication, copyright law (Negativland, 2005), commodification, authenticity, ethics and aesthetics. Introducing post-colonial and transcultural threads to the subject, as is required of a study of *Tanzania*, further expands the range of discussion to the exposure of power dynamics (Feld, 2012) and to critiques of inter-cultural politics. Especially throughout its second chapter, this paper engages to a varying extent with most of these topics; I have organised this engagement into ontological and semiotic theories of sampling, post-colonial theorisations of cultural display and ethnographic ethics, and discourses of musical commodification and narrative presentation. I consider each of these topics to be useful in giving background information necessary for a narrative analysis of *Tanzania*. To maintain some level of focus, I concentrate ultimately on multi-modal narrative communication and how this engages, if at all, with established post-colonial critiques of the appropriation and display of cultural identities. Consequently, I advance the following research aims and research questions.

## 1.2 Research aims, research questions and overview

### 1.2.1 Research aims

*RA1.* Form an understanding of the aesthetics, meanings, ethics and problematics of the selected case study.

*RA2.* Critically contextualise this understanding using current theories and discussions of new media and cultural display.

*RA3.* Develop an improved understanding of the considerations pertinent to the ethical practice of transcultural sampling.

### 1.2.2 Research questions

*RQ1.* What creative uses of sampling occur in the case study? What meanings do these uses of samples produce? How is sampling practice best understood to accommodate these meanings?

*RQ2.* How does the case study engage narratively with issues of power, agency, and the identification and display of cultures?

### 1.2.3 Overview

Chapter 2 introduces and discusses theoretical materials considered to be of importance in critically analysing and interpreting *Tanzania*. To that end, it is divided into three broad sections: sampling practice, cultural display, and commodification.

Chapter 3 details the methodological strategy advanced for analysing *Tanzania*. Chiefly, and inspired by multi-modal critical discourse studies, I advocate analysis of *Tanzania* using the Referenzanalysekatalog (RAK) method of Thomas Burkhalter.

Chapter 4 comprises first my attempt at RAK analysis of *Tanzania* and related material, and second the concluding summary of my findings. I organise these findings initially in response to research questions RQ1 and RQ2, and secondarily as several further remarks. My answer to RQ1 is that *Tanzania* displays three broad categories of sampling practice, namely identifiable material, sampler, and non-referential texture. *Identifiable material* preserves human voices, suggesting ethical considerations as well as permitting the presentation of simulated collaboration between Jeanneau and Hadza. *Sampler* refers to the once-typical function of hardware samplers as triggering samples for melodic or other musical purposes. *Non-referential texture* refers to sampled sounds clearly representing electro-acoustically nothing in particular, betraying an indulgence in raw textural experimentation, or otherwise

## Introduction

contributing an indirect evocation of space, context or intimacy. I find that altogether, Jeanneau's electro-acoustic reconstructions are surreal and evocative, organised and presented as explicit fantasy. My answer to RQ2 is that by embracing fantastical elements, *Tanzania* declines to display or describe real Hadza. In so doing, it subverts both traditional ethnography and world music commodification. Instead, Jeanneau attempts to reimagine the specific historical event of his encounter with Hadza people as an undescriptive fantasy. Thus, the album navigates between the problematic poles of mere signification (general) and essentialist description (specific). It faces some trouble on both counts and, at its worst, seems to essentialise Hadza as instruments for Jeanneau's experience, serving a western fever dream of primitive escape. At perhaps its best, the album gestures by way of its extraordinary sonics towards a transcendent cultural experience and towards a self-reflective methodology for sampling practice. I offer also two further remarks, first on considerations for sampling artists in light of present findings and second on both clear limitations in the present study and suggestions for future research in the area.

## Chapter 2: Theory and background

This chapter introduces and discusses theoretical positions key to a fruitful analysis of the sampling practice and narrative display of other cultures found in *Tanzania*. Section 2.1 discusses the theorisation of sampling in cultural theory, which over time has shifted away from the ontology of samples (what samples are) and towards the agency of samples (what samples and sampling artists do and mean). I suggest that representational and nomadic understandings of sampling capture its full scope of meanings better than do those that privilege originals. At the same time, I acknowledge that sampling remains an epistemologically and semiotically inconsistent practice across and within different artistic contexts, including those of listeners.

Section 2.2 discusses appropriation in the post-colonial context of recontextualising and displaying materials attributable other cultures. It discusses also a post-modern understanding of ethnography as an ethically uncompromising evocation.

Finally, section 2.3 examines the effects of commodification upon the meanings of sample-based music. It concludes with a summary and discussion of John Corbett's (2000) critique of Orientalism in western experimental music.

### 2.1 Theories of sampling

This section distinguishes three theoretical approaches to sampling practice, namely instance, representation and nomad. The primary difference between each theory is the stage in the creative process at which it supposes a sample to possess meaning. According to what I call the instance view, this possession of meaning is ontological, which is to say that it is already present at the initial stage of sampling and unaffected by recontextualisation. According to the representation view, the possession of meaning depends upon the recontextualisation a sample undergoes. Finally, according to the nomad view, the sample essentially lacks original meaning and is thus contextualised rather than *re*contextualised; nevertheless, nomadic contextualisation may (and surely often does) recall a prior context for a sample.

### 2.1.1 Instance

According to Zed Adams (2018), the understanding of sampling dominant in literature on the subject, and explicitly in the legal description and regulation of sampling in at least the US, is what I call the instance view. This position takes a sample to be an ontological instance of the original work from which it was drawn. This means that when a sample appears in a piece of music, the instance view understands that the original work itself, whatever changes it has undergone, is present as a real instance rather than merely represented as a reference (2018, p. 256).

Particularly when hearing a transparent use of sampling, the orientation of the instance view is understandable. Moreover, its convenience in matters of intellectual property and copyright law is clear. For example, in US sampling law such a view promises that samples may be differentiated and quantified as easily as any other sort of property (see McLeod and DiCola, 2011). Legality, ethics, and the effects of appropriation upon artistic integrity have consistently proved the most controversial dimensions to sampling. Understood generally as the borrowing of cultural material, the practice of artistic appropriation predates the technology of sampling by over a millennium (Katz, 2010, p. 148). Issues of the legality and ethics of appropriation were nothing new in the 1980s, then, when sampling technology began gathering momentum in consumer markets (Porcello, 1991). Katz (2010) shares a tale of unauthorised sampling provoking an arguably disproportionate legal response; Norman Cook, best known pseudonymously as Fatboy Slim, was ultimately obliged to relinquish all publishing royalties of the piece ‘Going Out of My Head’ to Pete Townshend, guitarist of The Who, despite the offending sample’s constituting only a part of the entire song. One explanation for such an outcome is that substantial entities in the music industry have as much to do with “the business of musical ownership and financial growth and protection” as they have to do with more romantic narratives of artistic creation (Feld, 2000b, p. 258). In other words, the regulation of clearly bounded entities is metaphysically useful – for some – in the politics of musical ownership. Moreover, the ontological commitment of the instance view, inherited from recording capture in general, seems to respond to a western metaphysical preoccupation with autonomous original essences – and total knowledge over them.

The instance view assumes a direct and fundamental relationship between a sample and the recording from which it was derived. Consider the Bob & Earl 1963 rhythm and blues hit ‘Harlem Shuffle’, whose first seven seconds are marked by a distinctive fanfare. In 1992, the

US hip hop duo House of Pain famously sampled this fanfare (among other material) for their song 'Jump Around'. Just as on 'Harlem Shuffle', the sampled fanfare introduces the recording, such that House of Pain seemingly appropriate both the recorded musical section and its musical function. However, the sample does not go unchanged. It undergoes recontextualisation: a new song in a style unlike that of 'Harlem Shuffle' follows the fanfare. The sample is subjected also to electro-acoustic manipulation: its tempo is slower and its pitch wavers, as if rendered on exhausted, uncalibrated playback equipment. These alterations comically extinguish the original fanfare's boisterous energy. House of Pain have given it a new, referential function of mediating – for a new authorial purpose – the signification of the sampled material. Naturally, the instance view might acknowledge that the creative manipulation and recontextualisation of samples adds to them new information. Yet such a view does deny that such new information changes the existence of the work sampled, either originally or as it now appears. It denies any ontological significance in how experiences of a work may differ between its original form and sampled forms. It therefore privileges the origin as well as figuring it into the new context of the sample. In either case, it is essentially the same work and never merely something else that refers to it (2018, p. 256). Adams suggests that, accordingly, the instance view will find a photograph depicted within another photograph to be an instance of it (2018, p. 256).

In summary, the instance view of sampling acknowledges no way in which resignification and recontextualisation can alter the identity and existence of the material contained within a sample; what is sampled can be only what it was originally.

### 2.1.2 Representation

The problem with the instance view of sampling is its privileging the original work to which the sample refers. This is a strict ontological commitment that, at the expense of practical and expressive relationships between appropriated material and new contexts, concentrates on the discrimination of objects. This dismissal of practice commits it to incomplete understandings of many works of appropriation art. Feld's (2000a) critique of Deep Forest would have been unable to elaborate as it does on reductive signification – on what Deep Forest *mean* by their recontextualising strategy – by committing to the instance view. By the late 1980s, a scholarly trend had begun towards studying musical meaning multi-perspectively as something constituted less by autonomous objects than by musical practice. Making such activity and experience a site of musical meaning contrasts strongly with traditionally formalist or



## Theory and background

Platonistic musicological preferences for the work itself as a robust, external abstract essence with a realist armoury of invariant potential meanings. Christopher Small's significant contribution to the trend away from such discourse coined the verbal noun *musicking* to articulate an understanding of music as an activity or process rather than as an object (1998, p. 2). Small considers any activity contributing "to the nature of the event that is a musical performance" to be musicking, be it composing, performing with an instrument, dancing or even less directly musical activities (1998, p. 9). For Small, the meanings expected of music arise from complex, ritually determined aesthetic associations between tradition, socio-politics, acoustic environments and techniques of composition and performance. The meanings of such features as these, and any others of pertinence, are guided together by a logic whose validation arises from historical endurance (1998, p. 129). The perceived work of music in a performance is action and interaction between individuals and between individual activities, so organised, assembled or entangled as to stimulate (to satisfy or frustrate) expectations. Such an understanding of music requires no formalist preference for the score itself, for instance, as the single site of meaningful or ontological disclosure. By describing music as "the organization of noise" Jacques Attali (2009, p. 4) likens music to language not only as vocal organisation but as syntactical, lexical and contextual structures with durational meanings. Musical sequences are more than isolated, self-referential notes; their experience – and thereby their signification – is a sequential relation of each to the other in a social and aesthetic continuum. A formalist work of pure aesthetics, engaged by a rigorously formalist approach to listening and contemplation, might lay claim to a theoretically pure essentialism. Yet theoretical and essential purity is of limited interest in studies of culture, where identity exerts itself also in practice and remains in continuous socio-historical, and thus relational, motion – if it is something to be acknowledged at all.

For his part, Adams recommends replacing the instance view with a representational understanding of sampling. He makes two objections of his own to the instance view. He claims first that samples can merely represent (rather than be) their sample sources and second that samples need not constitute instances of their sample sources (2018, p. 256). He makes four points, which he prefers to call "big picture ideas" for their applicability beyond discussions merely of musical works (2018, p 256).

First, the expectations of listeners strongly affect the representational significance of recorded content; in Adams's words, "if we expect a feature to be significant, we are more

likely to pay attention to it” (2018, p. 259). As Small might say, such a feature then plays a greater role in the musicking of listeners.

Second, the expectations of listeners affect the degree of representational success, that is, perceived realism, that listeners attach to recordings. Among other things, the commercial introduction of the CD format allowed listeners to enjoy an unprecedented reduction in the noise floor of reproduced recordings. Consequently, older issues of the same music on formats such as vinyl and tape now appeared to be less realistic because a new degree of separation materialised between musical and non-musical sounds (2018, p. 259-261). Listeners could now expect that nothing audible on the CD would lack representational importance (2018, p. 260).

Third, the distinct features of such a representation as a piece of recorded music can themselves influence the process of signification. For instance, repeatability allows a listener great familiarity with the sonic features of a recording. Unlike live music performance, recording preserves semblances of historical events that would otherwise be experienced only once (Attali, 2009, p. 41). In defiance of temporality, records possess an enduring tangibility. Becoming familiar with one can turn otherwise insignificant features, such as surface noise (which some find valuable) or musical details missed on previous listens, into features a listener considers important or even necessary for fulfilling certain expectations and creating enjoyment (Adams, 2018, pp. 261-262). Understandably, musical formalism would rather not acknowledge enjoyment and any corresponding musical signification as useful information for the study of musical aesthetics, particularly that of western art music.<sup>3</sup> Yet the present paper, like many discussions of new media, is not a study of pure music. Being primarily concerned with artistic discourse and narrative display, it perhaps ought not even to be considered a musical study.

Finally, Adams targets the error of oversimplification in claiming every occurrence of a sample to count as an ontological instance. Re-recorded versions, bootlegs, physically degraded individual copies and such other conditions of variation can apply to one and the same work, as such, yet nonetheless fail to represent and deliver it according to listener expectations. In Adams’s words, the identity of original works depends not merely upon “what they look or sound like” but moreover upon “their history of production” (2018, pp. 262-264). Sampling allowed the influential US hip hop group Public Enemy to invoke a “pantheon of

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<sup>3</sup> Critical of any association between musical aesthetics and unscrutinised feeling, the nineteenth century music critic Eduard Hanslick wryly recommended diethyl ether and chloroform as swifter means to mere enjoyment than musical listening (Hanslick, 1986, p. 59).

black figures” into their material to create a collage dense with African American political community (Katz, 2010, p. 163). Such invocation depends upon an active sense of original essences, although those referenced are present only in simulation. Katz’s observations on this case mirror those of Adams on realism, familiarity and expectations, for it is not merely the voices and words of figures sampled that Public Enemy covet but also the representational significance of “specific and well-known performances ... heard on discs of a certain vintage” (2010, p. 163). Crucially, Katz claims that the messages of ‘Fight the Power’ by Public Enemy and the sampling technology used in its composition cannot fully be understood independently of one another (2010, p. 165). The capacity of the song to display meanings, by creating such intertextual alliances, depended upon the emerging creative potential of sampling at the time. In other words, a theory of the aesthetic project of sampling should not isolate it from the creative affordances of sampling technology.

In their arguments and examples, Adams and Katz separately suggest that what a listener expects from a sample determines its perceived realism, and that this interaction between expectation and perceived realism contributes to the ontology (or identity) of the sample. Far from being fully independent, this ontology of sample-based works is completed only by present musickers. Therefore, identity does not stem merely from the original conditions in which the sampled material was produced. Accepting Adams’s arguments means accepting that the instance view of sampling stifles the identity and agency of new media works. In its preoccupation with originals, it obstructs, even if only by distraction, a full appreciation of new media works on their own terms. Fully understanding and appreciating such works requires accepting that their meaningful relationships with sampled material need be no more than representational.

### **2.1.3 Nomad**

Both the instance and representational views of sampling anticipate a meaningful relationship between an original recording and its new context as a sample (they disagree on both the ontological status and eventual importance of the original context of the sample). Yet the logical development of a practice-based understanding of musical meaning and sampling must anticipate also the severance of the relationship between original and sample. Enter the sample as non-representation, or nomad.

The creative potential of sheer non-reference, owing to a sampling practice no longer interested in direct representation, informs Vanessa Chang’s (2015) discussion of sampling.

Chang reminds of the importance to sampling of understanding “creativity as the construction of diverse, unexpected relationships”, for “[in] sampling, sound marks the beginning of the creative process, and is accordingly treated as raw material” (2015, p. 146). In the same paragraph, Chang makes clear that already-existing sound as raw material fundamentally contrasts sampling with instrumental performance, for instruments generate transient sound from scratch; unlike with sampling, sound is the *end* of the instrumental creative process. However, the instrument known as the sampler, which Chang leaves unmentioned, softens this contrast. In typical usage, the sampler maps one or more samples across a piano roll, allowing their playback in chromatically quantised sequences.<sup>4</sup> Although this makes an instrumental voice of a sample, it is material captured, already prepared, and repeatable. A degree of playfulness results from the so-called plasticity of these sound recordings, which is to say the creative affordances of using and combining discrete fragments of sound. In theory, effect and practice, a sample can become a new sound altogether, losing all intelligible connections to its original event; it can be reshaped and rearranged as non-referential texture. The deliberate manipulation of recorded material in this fashion describes the chief project of *musique concrète* to render music as non-referential form, to negate a cultural (embodied) musical voice.

Chang remarks also that “[sampling] practice often pivots on the elision of the sample’s origin or, at the very least, the deflection of its aura” (Chang, 2009, p. 148). This is possible both in representational recontextualisation and by accepting that there are no essential links “between a sign and its meaning, a sound and its signified, or its reception” (2009, p. 148). This is the basic assumption of the nomad view: whatever its content, a sample is mere material without essential meaning. As such, it is less possible to recontextualise a sample than to contextualise one. The use of a sample may invoke an original context and from it derive meaning; yet a sample is no more disposed to such a context, or strand of meaning, than to any other. Although a sample may possess a persistent, preserved resemblance to its original, and although this may render inevitable an authorial or listener reference to it, the link is otherwise inessential and can be dissolved partially or entirely by emergent conditions of contextualisation and reconstruction. Naturally, these conditions include those in which the listener-consumer participates, potentially (or perhaps inevitably) misreading and thus further recontextualising the media text. For this reason, Chang borrows from Deleuze and Guattari

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<sup>4</sup> Today there exists a niche industry of painstakingly recorded sample libraries available for purchase, such as those utilised by the MIDI pipe organ software Hauptwerk or the more general Kontakt by Native Instruments.

the concept of the rhizome. This difficult concept formed part of their project to liberate the study of cultural material, perhaps as well as liberating cultural material itself, from traditionally linear conditions of identity. In part, this means that it frees them from the violence of differentiation (negation). By my understanding, such differentiation is characterised by dualistic approaches to epistemology. With the rhizome, disparity and linear progression do not necessarily underscore meanings and identities. What this means for Chang's discussion is that the rhizome lacks any obligation to place signifying importance on the root (origin) of a recorded sound. Without this hierarchical impulse, the meanings of samples arise from situated series of interchangeable interactions (2009, p. 156). In other words, samples so conceived represent nothing by default. They do not depend for their existence upon referential differentiation. They lack fixed identity, existing because of the rest of the music rather than in spite of it. Their meanings arise in assemblage with other materials, forms and emergent semantic articulations, and as such are in a continuous state of becoming.

The rhizome of Deleuze and Guattari presents a radical retheorisation of western epistemology, aiming to embrace difference without representation. To their suggestion (2005, p. 15) that we should stop believing in trees (and instead believe in the epistemology of rhizomes), Christopher L. Miller (1993) responds critically by asking “[but] what if (a) [trees] are there, or (b) a large segment of humanity thinks they are there?” (p. 11). He is asking how (and whether or not) Deleuze and Guattari's iconoclastic articulation of nomad thought can possibly embrace and express, without self-contradiction, the widespread practice of the non-nomad thought they aim to replace. A corresponding question might ask how (and whether or not) the nomadistic understanding of sampling can capture hierarchical (that is, referential or invocational) uses of samples. Although reference may be accidental on the part of artists (samples may consist of traces recognisable by only some), the use of deliberate references, or perhaps even of intended instances, cannot be excluded from consideration prior to analysis. In other words, many artists and listeners do expect and interpret samples as instances; others, or the same in other circumstances, interpret samples representationally. It may not be methodologically sensible in the analysis of sample-based music to dispense entirely with the paradigm of the tree.

## 2.2 Cultural display

### 2.2.1 Cultural exploitation

This section examines some post-colonial theorisation of the movement of power between cultures. In popular discourse, cultural appropriation typically refers to the use of the cultural materials of a culture subordinated by members of a dominant culture through unequal power relations. This is particularly controversial when occurring under circumstances that would constitute misuse of the materials in their original contexts. In post-colonial theory, appropriation refers additionally to the use by subordinated cultures of the cultural materials of their dominators – “language, forms of writing, film, theatre, even modes of thought and argument such as rationalism, logic and analysis” – in the (re)articulation and (re-)expression of their own cultural identities (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007, p. 15). If the former understanding of appropriation recalls pilfering and exploitation, the latter invokes resistance and survival.

Finding appropriation often inadequately theorised in academic literature, Rogers (2006) separates it into four varieties. This separation reflects distributions of the historical, social, political, cultural, and economic conditions of appropriation (2006, p. 477). While drawing in various concepts and discussions pertinent to exotica and music, the present section discusses two of Rogers’s varieties: cultural exploitation (this section) and transculturation (2.2.2). I adopt both terms for use in the present paper as Rogers understands them.

Rogers understands *cultural exploitation* as appropriation marked by a distinct cultural relationship, specifically the use of materials from a subordinated culture by a dominant culture “without substantive reciprocity, permission and/or compensation” (2006, p. 477). This distinguishes cultural exploitation from such other forms of appropriation as cultural resistance<sup>5</sup>. Critical discussions of the commercial use of native cultural materials often concentrate on cultural exploitation. Commodification reifies cultural material into exchange value, abstracting it from the cultural context in which it was created and for which it was intended. Situations in which this occurs may stimulate questions of cultural degradation (2006, p. 488). Moreover, the fetishisation arising from the continuous differentiation of commodities exposes cultural materials to the influences of neo-colonialism and other perpetuations of unequal power relations. Commodification may even find a dominant culture redefining the

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<sup>5</sup> What Rogers calls *cultural resistance* resembles the post-colonial description of appropriation by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin in that it is marked by the oppositional agency of the subordinated culture.

unfamiliar or oppositional behaviour of a subordinate culture. This substitutes innocuous fetishes, performing placating gestures, for independent or genuinely oppositional meanings or functions (2006, p. 488). In this way, commodification both enacts and disguises unequal power relations, suppressing their opposition in the process.

These processes of commodification reflect hegemonic domination, one of whose troubles for some subjugated cultures is the concept of ownership itself. Ownership as well as sovereignty “articulate models of both the nation-state and the sovereign subject of liberal (possessive) individualism”, thereby perpetuating the understanding of cultures as “singular, clearly bounded and autonomous” (2006, p. 489). This understanding is hardly helped by discourses of degradation and preservation, in which the supposed purity of a subordinate culture is at stake. Such an idea risks essentialising the culture, flattening a community into a distinct object. Unsurprisingly, this contrasts with the comfortable notion of the dominating culture as a dynamic, adaptable and successful entity, the independent, individualistic survivor (2006, p. 489). This logic regards the real agency of subjugated cultures with suspicion, for showing too much capacity for appropriation and adaptation jeopardises the integrity of a supposedly pure culture.

A more acceptable act of agency for subordinate cultures is to commodify their own cultural materials and participate in the marketplace system. This is an ethical comfort to tourists and other consumers, as it permits the defence that they are participating not in exploitation but in a fair and mutually complicit exchange. Yet as Rogers notes, “the binary of free choice versus coercion is inadequate” because, by itself, it is incapable of communicating the historical and economic conditions in which such practices occur. Nor can it capture the altering influences of the tourist market and “dominant aesthetic ideologies” (2006, p. 490).

In summary, cultural exploitation theorises appropriation by clearly delineating cultural entities and tracing the movement and resignification of cultural materials within a hierarchical power structure.

### **2.2.2 Transculturation**

Rogers sees transculturation as “an effort to theorize appropriation in the conditions of global capitalism in a neocolonial and postmodern era” (2006, p. 499). Such conditions create a continuum of resignification, reconstruction and recontextualisation of cultural objects and entities by a range of agents across geographical, geopolitical and epistemological distances. Transculturation distrusts the attribution of any materials inhabiting this continuum to a single

originating culture. This is because transculturation theorises cultures not as individual entities but as networks of relations (Rogers, 2006, p. 498). At the cost of such straightforward attribution, theorising cultures as networks of relations apparently allows transculturation to overcome the problems of cultural essentialism. Clifford (1988) links the conceptual hegemony of territory and nation to western conceptualisation itself, upon whose metaphorical view of cultures as essentially discrete organisms connotations of degradation, preservation and survival largely depend, and with which the concepts of fragmentation and disjuncture, as well as such “complex historical processes” as appropriation, are incompatible (1988, p. 338). At the same time, “state definitions of indigeneity” (or perhaps generally of what the state considers culturally subservient) often change, inevitably inviting the very assertion that indigeneity (or perhaps cultural identity generally) “is both fluid and uncertain” (Sider, 2009, p. 291).

Although cultural exploitation problematises essentialism and exposes harmfully unbalanced power relationships, it continues to refer theoretically to the interaction between distinct, robustly identifiable entities (Roberts, 2006, p. 491). Consequently, cultural exploitation can seem obliged to reinforce the conceptual dynamics that facilitate unbalanced relationships. Such celebratory depictions of appropriation as hybridity both contain troubling assumptions about cultural purity and are vulnerable, as political statements, to stifling commercial reification. This is why Hutnyk places such importance on the supplementation of politically charged hybridity in music with political action; indeed, if anything, the former ought to supplement to the latter.

To overcome essentialism, proponents of transculturation theorise cultural hybridity rather by “[engaging] multiple lines of difference simultaneously” than by relying upon organic binaries (p. 491). At the same time, transculturation retains the crucial assumption in critical studies of appropriation that power moves unequally in cultural relationships (p. 493). As a result, transcultural analyses ought to be able to identify unequal distributions of power in the organisation, presentation and resignification of inter- and cross-cultural entities. However, as Rogers observes, transculturation here succeeds only at the cost of such overt ethical systems or political justifications as can be observed in cultural exploitation and other theorisations of appropriation (pp. 493-494). The principal reason for this is that although transculturation follows lines of difference, it assumes no original as such. Therefore, the strongest distinguishing feature of transculturation is that its theorising structure requires no commitment to any critique of exploitative or otherwise harmful appropriation. Although transculturation



precludes no such commitment, it would have to exclude it from any of its formulations. This may prove a disappointing requirement in studies as charged as those of cultural domination and exploitation. Moreover, such a requirement betrays ideals of transcendental observation and universal knowledge, suggesting a positivism dependent upon ideological bracketing.

The simplest compromise between cultural exploitation and transculturation might begin with bracketing essentialism as an epistemic problem and instead concentrating on the conditions of its actual manifestations, or how it functions in practical discourse and appears in political action. This is because, even if essentialism were excluded from consideration, fundamental differentiation between cultural practice, and all the narratives this may enact and contain, may in some cases prove apparent (Sider, 2009). What Gerald Sider here refers to might be called common-sense cultural identity, in that it is apparent in obvious misunderstanding and misappropriation on the part of “local elite White men miming what they think they saw” (p. 291). Compare this remark with Alan Bishop’s complaint that white artists who master Javanese gamelan music without adapting or developing the creative possibilities of the instrument are offensive; he feels that all such artists do is attempt to reproduce (thereby appropriating) another musical tradition (Novak, 2017, p. 34). Whether Sider and Bishop would agree on one case or another is irrelevant; the point is that neither one positively fulfils the essentialist obligation of defining the culture being appropriated; instead, both go only so far as to indicate the supposedly obvious limits of the cultural identity of the appropriator. They seem to perceive harmful appropriation as the transgression of a common-sense boundary and, crucially, that this boundary need not be epistemically flattened into some organic entity to wield ethical or political importance.

Thus, in the best possible outcome, transculturation might offer a relatively clear position from which to begin a secondary and more politically or even ethically inclined study of injustice.

### **2.2.3 Post-modern ethnography**

When listening to *Tanzania*, I had the occasional impression that its soundscapes, their samples seemingly uncommitted to linear representation, portrayed fantastical, emergent cultural encounters without attempting to describe them. If there was a narrative, it seemed to be that there was little to say and no-one to say it; instead, the soundscapes invite listeners to feel and to appreciate the humanity expressed in the textures. Although I stress now (and will do so again later) that *Tanzania* itself is no work of post-modern ethnography, it occasionally

resembles one at least metaphorically. Whether post-modern ethnography truly informed Jeanneau's artistic practice remains unknown. Nevertheless, the concept is worth including in the present chapter for two reasons. First, it offers an ethical answer to the problems of cultural essentialism, although in so doing it creates trouble of its own; second, it offers some basis for the interpretation of metaphor throughout *Tanzania*.

While cultural exploitation and transculturation are theoretical approaches to the critical analysis of appropriation, post-modern ethnography (as Stephen A. Tyler proposed it) considers the prerequisites of an ethical text pertaining to a cultural encounter. What is ethnography, the writing of culture, if written with only one voice? Such a question exposes a distinctly troubling problem with ethnography. One of Tyler's answers, in reference to the PhD dissertation of Robert Lane Kauffmann, is that like any corresponding text, ethnography is an expression of "only the cognitive utopia of the author" (Tyler, 1986, p. 132). Whatever the intentions of such an author, Tyler feels that it will not do for something as delicate as a cultural encounter (being so vulnerable to the ideological management of power) to depend upon its being represented by a single voice. In fact, Tyler mistrusts cultural representation altogether. "[T]he [true] point of discourse," he asserts, "is not how to make a better representation, but how to *avoid* representation" (1986, p. 128, emphasis added). Like other disciplines, ethnography is troubled by its dependency upon referential discourses of description, comparison, classification and generalisation (1986, p. 130). This means that such discourses subject ethics to ethnographic form. I understand *ethnographic form* to mean prevailing metaphysical and practical standards of disciplinary and methodological networks traditionally associated with ethnography. Taylor offers an historical overview of how these networks have progressed over time, including the ways ethnographers have construed themselves and the ethnographic others they study. To claim that traditional referential discourses subject ethics to ethnographic form is to claim that ethnographic practice as a delineated discipline precedes and prefigures the ethics of emergent encounters. To Taylor, preceding and prefiguring ethics in this way is as good as curtailing it. Thus, Taylor would probably argue that traditional ethnography is fated to fail ethically. In formulating post-modern ethnography, he suggests reversing the relationship, advancing instead the subjection of ethnographic form to ethics. This proposal radically alters the basic conditions of ethnographic encounters.

The ethics to which Tyler advocates the subjection of form is one of so-called polyphony, of collaborative participation and perspectival relativity. No participating party enjoys

privilege over the others, and there certainly ensues no ethnographic authority (no transcendental observer) to relay any conditions of ethnic identity (1986, p. 126). Therefore, Tyler's post-modern ethnographic encounter is free of representation, for no participant represents any cultural identity; moreover, no observation or corresponding transcription of any ethnographic object occurs. This sort of ethnography – although I am uncertain that it can or should be *sorted* – is neither able nor willing to produce a referential text on an ethnic community. It does not pursue universal knowledge (1986, p. 131). What it does instead is enable a fantastical sense of a possible world – possible because intuitive to a reader, listener or viewer within the scope of common-sense reality. This collaboratively created sense Tyler calls evocation. It appears to be the closest thing to a reproduction of events (although it reproduces nothing and is unreal by nature) available in practice without interrupting ethics.

Because post-modern ethnography subjects form to ethics – to “the joint work of the ethnographer and his native partners” – it imposes no form as such (1986, p. 127). Instead, form is emergent. Its contents, as it were, are as fragmentary, pluralistic and transient as lived experience. Therefore, post-modern ethnographic evocation is confined to no single medium of textualisation. Of more importance is that it is a textual means to evoking a collaborative, non-referential cultural encounter, which is to say that it succeeds as realism precisely because it declines to describe reality (1986, p. 137).

Rejecting the prescription of form, post-modern ethnography is destined to be imperfect in practice; its perfect or complete form eludes description (1986, p. 136). This elusiveness is what makes it transcendent. It underscores post-modern ethnographic form's existing only ever as practice and means, rather than as the abstract entity of discursive model.

It appears that post-modern ethnography shares with transculturation a distrust of and incompatibility with cultural essentialism. However, because transculturation is tasked with descriptive analysis, it is obliged to represent, which ostensibly interferes with ethical experience. Post-modern ethnography seeks to allow nothing to interfere with ethical experience and is thereby obliged not to represent. This is the most important and here relevant point of post-modern ethnography: description itself is unethical, or at least always curtails ethics. Conversely, lack of description in a context of neo-liberal global capitalist hegemony is liable to curtail politics, making it impractical by default. A post-modern ethical approach to cultural inequality remains systemically unfeasible, in that traditional politics emerges from degrees of essence, representation and negation.

In any case, a work of sample-based art rendered by way of post-modern ethnographic methodology, if possible, would seemingly no longer merit classification as appropriative. Instead, it would prove only evocative, provided that its emergent textuality, including that of any agency apparently evoked in samples, were accordingly collaborative.

Finally, it is necessary to conclude with the admission of what is already clear to the reader, namely that post-modern ethnography was, regrettably, inadequately researched for this paper. Drawing on only a single source on the subject, at that a source first published over three decades ago, undoubtedly limits in numerous ways the insight available from any invocation of post-modern ethnography for my case study. Nevertheless, I expect even this shallow treatment of the subject to prove useful.

### **2.3 Commodification**

Owing to the circumstances of its recording and commercial release, *Tanzania* might withstand a critique of commercial exploitation if it depends substantially upon the distribution of economic resources. However, the commodification of music reaches beyond material proceeds and into critical issues of the abstraction and quantification of relationships. In these areas too it will be possible to search for discursively problematic features in *Tanzania*.

#### **2.3.1 Musical commodities**

Music, an immaterial pleasure turned commodity, now heralds a society of the sign, of the immaterial up for sale, of the social relation unified in money. (Attali, 2009, pp. 3-4)

In one way or another, most publicly available music in capitalist societies is entrenched in the context of the musical arm of the culture industry or, as Adorno and Horkheimer called it, “the entertainment business” (2016, p. 132). Understanding reproduction format or medium (CD, record, cassette) as a communicative mode, this section discusses some of the meanings and ideologies of music as a commodity in terms pertinent to the present study.

For Attali, there is money wherever there is music (2009, p. 3). From this position, a crude recipe for the commodification of music emerges: “deritualize a social form, repress an activity of the body, specialize its practice, sell it as a spectacle, generalize its consumption, then see to it that it is stockpiled until it loses its meaning” (2009, p. 5). Like Small, Attali looks

not to music rendered in such objects as scores or recordings but to music as spheres of practice. Indeed, scores and recordings might better represent the objective flattening of musical practice into commodity forms through specialisation and generalisation. Nevertheless, Timothy D. Taylor (2007) reminds that the commodification of music itself is an historically and technologically situated process; similarly, Chanan refers to the “startling mutation” to which continually developing means of reproduction and diffusion have exposed the commodity forms of music (1994, p. 13). A theory of the commodification of music ought to respond carefully to the specifics of context. This is a general caution against the polemical legacy of Theodor Adorno, which Taylor views as “a grand theorizing that pays little attention to—or even disdains—what people were actually doing in a particular place and time (2007, p. 284). With this warning in mind, the present section discusses the relationship between music and the two commodifying processes of reification and fetishisation. These concepts are of signifying importance to *Tanzania* as a music product.

The concepts of reification and especially fetishisation are central to Marxian studies of commodification. They are most closely associated with the first chapter of Marx’s foundational *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*. Being technical references, they do not alone position critical arguments. Scholars have devoted entire books, let alone masters degree theses, to arguing how best theoretically to understand reification, fetishisation and commodities. As the scope of the present paper terminates long before any useful contribution to such literature can be anticipated, the terms as they are used here may prove crude or oversimplified. At least for the purposes of this paper, I refer by *commodity* to a cultural object with a quantifiable marketplace exchange value. This term enables the positioning of *Tanzania* as a commercial music product circulating a market exchange system and, thereby, forming certain expectations about its design (for instance, that its design was in part informed by an interest in attracting sales). I refer by *reification* to a conceptual process in which the exchange value of a commodity, as well as the commodity-object itself, relate to the human relationships that produced it. Finally, I refer by *fetishisation* to a conceptual process of associating with the identity of a commodity certain properties that it does not innately possess. I consider this term especially important for considering the relationship between multi-modal narrative communication and commercial orientation throughout *Tanzania*. For instance, in what ways might its anti-commercial narrative serve its aim of attracting commercial interest?

## Theory and background

Taylor summarises reification after György Lukács as “a relationship between people that has been transformed into a thing” (2007, p. 283). This relationship ostensibly consists of both “the specificity of the labor and social relations invested in the commodity” and its use-value, that is, the qualitative value of the commodity in light of functional properties (Rogers, 2006, p. 488). The ensuing thing has instead quantitative (market exchange) value.

Taylor’s (2007) example of commodification is the development of the player piano during the early twentieth century. As a mechanical installation, the player piano enabled the performance of music at home without a pianist present; people no longer needed to make music for themselves. Instead, they were able to enjoy the live, autonomous playback of a recorded piano roll. In this way, the player piano came to contain not only the piano performances recorded to each roll but moreover the social and embodied activity of piano performance itself, as a kind of frozen, essentialised possibility or a network of affordances. By way of association, the work of creating music had been transferred from an activity of the body to the autonomy of a subservient object (Taylor, 2007, pp. 292-293). Taylor credits the player piano, the phonograph and radio as the primary technological forces behind the transformation of music from “something that people made themselves to a commodified and reified ‘music’ that people bought” (2007, p. 293). With the rituals and practices of musical performance now mediated by commodities, such transformations would affect the cultural, social, aesthetic and bodily associations and meanings of music.

The most modern reified musical commodity might be the digital stream, as offered by such subscription services as Spotify. Rather than a score, performance or recording, this commodity is the subscription itself. Users pay for usage rights, mediated by the curatorial tools of a private company’s proprietary software. Fleischer calls this commodity the branded musical experience (2017, p. 157).

Fetishisation refers to a consequence of reification, which is to say the apparent imbuing of a commodity with the value of a social property that it otherwise lacks. In capitalistic systems of exchange, use-value is consequential only indirectly; commodities directly possess only the quantitative property of exchange value. Being thus mere objects with prices, they are fundamentally equivalent and undifferentiated. As exchange value itself is not inherently consumable (Hampsher-Monk, 2010, p. 540), making a commodity consumable requires differentiation. “To create the appearance of difference (and hence value) amid this equivalence, additional meanings are attached to the commodity.” (Rogers, 2006, p. 488).

## Theory and background

These meanings, which lack any intrinsic connection to use-value, production or circulation, “are the (illusory) ends to which the commodity itself becomes the means of attainment” (2006, p. 488). Commodity fetishism has a heavy presence in the fields of product marketing and advertising; in Taylor’s case study, the great performers who were enlisted to record the original piano rolls were fetishised as essences captured by the resulting product. The experience of “hearing great artists in one’s home” was transported into “an object to hold in one’s hand” (Taylor, 2007, p. 301).

As noted, such terms as commodity fetishism offer only technical description. Adorno (2001) applies them to critical analysis, arguing that commodity fetishism has so entangled music with the market exchange systems of musical commodities that the content, style, cultural importance and experience of music are negatively affected. The listening practice of mass audiences has supposedly regressed; what was once an exploration of innate musical properties has become the enjoyment of mere fetishised properties. This can entail the veneration of disconnected parts of the works: the man “triumphantly” whistling the theme from the final section in Brahms’ First Symphony, observes a sullen Adorno, “is already primarily involved with its debris” (2001, p. 41). That work is unlike those of new media with which this study is more directly concerned. Adorno might consider much sample-based music, particularly that of subgenres such as vapourwave, to be (virtually) pure debris, music whose referential indulgence alone serves as aesthetic validation.

Reification and fetishisation may substantially affect the representation, which is to say the ethnic construction, of people featured on musical recordings. In their study of potlatch music, Coleman, Coombe and MacAraill (2012) draw attention to the ontology of archiving. Because of the complex social and even analogously legislative aspects of the potlatch, the three authors argue that the library record archive system to which the recordings officially belong fails adequately to represent either the full social dimensions of the music or its performers. This is because, viewed as a reifying process like commodification, it reduces the music to a westernised aesthetic object, a musical work or piece. To recall Tyler, it is formal description and classification interrupting ethics. It stifles cultural meanings by flattening them behind observed objects. Ultimately, it fully subjects those recorded to the ideology of the recordist and archivist.

Consider ethnographic field recordings in the independent music marketplace context. Ragnar Johnson’s 1979 recordings of ceremonial flute music in New Guinea Madang, released commercially for the first time in 2018 (Various, 2018), are subject to the same standardised

presentation one would find with much contemporary art music. The release appears on luxurious vinyl and CD formats, engineered in Berlin to a high standard, with several panels of contextualising liner notes and photography from Johnson. Such features correspond to certain stylistic commercial expectations for music releases in Anglo-European and US music markets. In this way, prevalent music marketplace fetishes not limited to recording format, presentation and stylistic eclecticism – all prescriptive of form – become almost inextricably involved with the display of cultural others. Is the whole world, as Adorno and Horkheimer lament, “made to pass through the filter of the culture industry”? (1997, p. 126).

To summarise this section, reification and fetishisation facilitate musical commodification by associating works of music with essentially extraneous information. At worst, these processes are reductive, distorting, or otherwise marked by compromise; Michael Chanan too notices that “the process of commercialization ends up by fetishizing certain features at the cost of others” (Chanan, 1994, p. 9). Taylor’s own summary is that “reification is the obscuring of the realm of the social and replacing it with objects” (2007, p. 301). Although merely a technical outcome, reification in commodifying practice may indicate deceit (of use-value) and suppression (of individual or collective action). My chief interest in reification for the purposes of this study is the extent to which it reduces signifiers of Hadza people and culture to commercial function.

### **2.3.2 Authenticity and hybridity**

In critical analyses of the music marketplace, it is uncontroversial to theorise exotica as a fetish for cultural difference whose function is to differentiate commodities. This section discusses the nebulous concepts of authenticity and hybridity. In cultural studies, neither term sports a precise definition and, as with terms in the previous section, my use of them for present purposes is marked with selective over-simplification. I refer by *authenticity* to the fetish of original essence in terms of sincere artistic expression. This fetish is narratively invoked often by producers of artworks as well as by their promoters. This term is here useful because of the importance of authenticity narratives to underground artists such as Kink Gong. I refer by *hybridity* to the fetish of combining and recontextualising types, classes, categories or essences perceived as discrete. So understood, hybridity is useful for studying narratives offering optimistic ideological justifications of exotica.



Although the conditions for construing original essence vary by context, Way and McKerrell find it appropriate to understand authenticity generally as “the quality of ‘sincerity’ or ‘playing from the heart’” (2017, p. 4). More technically, they figure it as “a social process of continual renegotiation of the shared ‘truths’ and canonical values of a particular musical community” (p. 5). Given the strong association of authenticity with desirable qualities of artistic integrity in music and other media, its prevalence in the commodity fetishism of music is unsurprising. If a consumer of music is keen to distinguish authentic artistry (whatever that may be) from pseudo-authentic posturing, it is in the interests of artists, record companies and other present parties to articulate narratives of authenticity. The most gymnastic of these may be the narrative of anti-commercialism, whose function is to balance the nebulous, qualitative notion of artistic integrity and the resourceful, quantitative pursuit of remuneration. By pursuing the validating and empowering effects of remuneration, among which supposedly lies the virtue of supporting underground, struggling or otherwise deserving artists, this negotiation consists in the ideological separation of remuneration from commercialism. Ostensibly if inconsistently in practice, this rescues the anti-commercialism sales pitch from self-contradiction.

*Hybridity* refers to the mixing of types or kinds, with a result displaying characteristics of each. In music, the term corresponds to the combination of different styles to produce novel arrangements. It could describe also a methodology of referential sampling. At its worst, it might be considered a corruption of transculturation by cultural exploitation. Critical and post-colonial theory consider the implications of hybridity (a word inherited from socio-biology) to be problematic. Particularly as a commodity fetish, hybridity creates difference by relying upon – and perhaps thereby perpetuating – the view of cultures (or musical styles) as static entities. In short, hybridity risks implying in abstraction the troubling notions of purity and impurity. Such differentiation requires decisions, perhaps all too tacit, about what is and is not ‘original’ and ‘intact’ as well as to what these designations refer when describing cultures and communities. As Spivak (cited in Hutnyk, 2000) puts it, hybridity assumes that there can be an opposite, something not hybrid that existed prior to hybridisation.

As a fetish, hybridity offers itself as a solution, an optimistic, ostensibly unproblematic embrace of difference. When representing the free mixing of styles, hybridity even lends itself well to narratives of sophisticated eclecticism. But Gordon Downie certainly has little time for the combinations of “more or less pre-fabricated elements” in the music of James MacMillan, where the cost of arbitrariness is the surrender of “original structural function and integrity” (Downie, 2004, p. 268). Thus, the work *Veni, Veni Emmanuel* suffers greatly from such

calculated reifications as “timbral doublings displaying a submission to creative automatism”, “a manifest historicism masking a compliance with authority” and “a naked sentimentalism borne of an absence of any genuine structural-harmonic and musico-discursive rationale” (p. 268). Corresponding accusations may face works that seem to embrace zealously eclectic exotica and cross-cultural hybridity for their own sake.

Superficially, hybridity resembles a crude classification (and thus an undoing) of the collaborative textuality evoked by post-modern ethnography. Hutnyk (2000) certainly finds hybridity too docile to be of much use: “[hybridity] and difference sell; the market remains intact” (2000, p. 36). Ultimately, he argues that “it is all very well to theorise the diaspora, the postcolony and the hybrid; but where this is never *interrupted by the necessity of political work*, it remains a vote for the status quo. Adorno would name this as the worst of horrors” (2000, p. 49, emphasis added). So, narratives of hybridity (and other fetishes implicated in discourses of exploitation) are more persuasive when they are neither used nor allowed to obscure unequal power relations behind the music between, for instance, western artists and their exotic collaborators or inspirers. Often in post-colonial music studies, the critical gauge of this process has begun with the modest question of remuneration and other material help stemming from a sense of “legal or moral concern” (Feld, 2000b, p. 257; see also Feld, 2000a and Frith, 2000). Although this approach depends on the reduction of (musical) labour to exchange value, the resulting distribution of resources may indicate the ideological flow of power more than artists themselves care to admit.

The most optimistic view Hutnyk can muster of hybridity he inherits from Spivak: hybridity can provide a clear position from which to question both the racism of the culturally dominant and “the ways in which cultural constructions can maintain exclusions” (2000, pp. 35-36). This affordance is applicable perhaps even more cleanly to transculturation (see section 2.2.2).

Ordinary or everyday political action, by which is meant the practical organisation of identities, continues to depend upon the articulation of essences for ethnic as well as many other social and cultural designations. Non-essentialism is easily construed as a threat to identities as they are normally understood. Consequently, it appears that traditional politics (in this case, of appropriation) is unable to respond consistently to such manifestations of non-essentialism as transculturation, sampling nomadism or the ideals of hybridity. The continuum of tension between identity and expression are where many new media artists presently find themselves.

### 2.3.3 Orientalism and experimental music

John Corbett's chapter in *Western Music and its Others* (2000) is worth attention here because it investigates exotica within the context of western experimental music practice. In so doing, it directly engages issues of importance to the case study of the present paper. Aside from issues of commodification, this section recalls theoretical material discussed in section 2.2.

Corbett's interest is in how "Orientalism [functions] in the experimental tradition" and the ways in which its discourses manifest in composition (Corbett, 2000, p. 163). Corbett observes that rhetorically, experimentation is closely linked to and often accompanied by "tropes clustered around the idea of exploration and discovery" (p. 166). Such tropes associate the artistic process with the desirable naivety of unearthing the unfamiliar. A similarly naive impression easily made, if inconsistently embraced by artist statements, is that the act of such unearthing and presentation is neutral, "value-free" (p. 166), as if more of a scientific than an artistic exercise. Yet "the colonialist impulse" materialises in such stories whenever the influence of non-western culture is apparent in the music (p. 166). The discovery-narrative of musical experimentation constituting a lustful search for the unfamiliar explains Corbett's suggestion that "the discoverer-composer ... surely will bring back ideas and practices from distant lands, perhaps ones that can enhance the quality of Western musical life" (p. 166). Folded into this narrative is the presumed primitiveness of pilfered material; Orientalism, claimed Edward Said, is in part characterised by the tendency of the west, in its own assertive self-identification, to essentialise and push the cultural Other backwards in time. Although the Other is considered unenlightened and inferior, its primitiveness becomes a resource coveted for its "rejuvenative powers in a period of mounting dissatisfaction with conventional Western musical civilization" (Corbett, 2000, p. 167). Desire for creative potential in "the conceptual apparatus of the great mystical philosophies of the East", supposes Chanan, "is perhaps only another symptom of the loss of selfhood of the West" (Chanan, 1994, p. 264). Supposing this interpretation to be sound, postcolonial theory expects western epistemology to ensure that the Other is always reliably different, invigoratingly primitive, and always lacking the strength to resist. In this situation, the ambiguous position of the artist "combines ... certain habits of thought rooted in the mentality of the colonizer, typical of Orientalism, with the desperate need to escape from them" (1994, p. 264).

Corbett approaches various Twentieth Century North American experimental composers with such considerations in mind. He analyses selections of their music, identifying various

manifestations of the exploitative and dominating impulses of Orientalism. For instance, while Henry Cowell's early piano work from the 1910s and 1920s "resisted the lure of superficial exoticism" (2000, p. 169), such later material as *Persian Set* (1957) falls short of the same standard. The work "has an air of pastichery and world-music kitsch about it. It borders more on easy listening music's global exotics ... than on Cowell's earlier promise of an armada of startling new musical resources" (p. 172).

Elsewhere, John Cage deployed what Corbett calls a conceptual Orientalism, applying non-western inspiration less to musical style than to methodology. As free of exoticism as the musical outcome may be, Corbett is obliged to report what he sees as the Orientalism underlying Cage's work and invigorating his compositional practice (p. 171). A similar observation marks the Steve Reich piece *Drumming*. Corbett notes that, although Reich studied Ewe music in Ghana with the drummer Gideon Alorworye, he was at pains to avoid exoticism or pastiche; for instance, *Drumming* uses western instead of African instruments, strongly altering upfront meanings in its performance. Corbett judges approvingly that the piece keeps in focus its primary motivation of uprooting traditional rhythmic styles in western music (p. 174).

Corbett is less impressed by Jon Hassell's 'fourth world' musical developments. He accuses Hassell of bracketing the problematics of hybridity to enjoy the benefits of appropriation. Hassell relies on the seductiveness of the superficial and exotic traces of non-western materials that drift around these supposedly undifferentiated soundscapes (p. 176). As well as any financial returns, to think of Hassell as a career musician, one such benefit is the defensive notion of an artistic safe space in which the overt fantasy of utopian tranquillity, ostensibly and conveniently disinterested in semblances of cultural origins, characterises the free mixing of musical signifiers. In other words, the fourth world is a venue of western privilege – primarily the privilege to ignore the politics of identity. Ultimately, Corbett feels that the fourth world fundamentally expresses Orientalism in the sense of its resembling an "imperialist mapping of a fantasy space of otherness" (p. 177). Like the treatment of Afunakwa by Deep Forest, reductive de-contextualisation of this sort resembles an indulgence in exotic signification. This is the risk of non-description when power dynamics are unbalanced; what appears celebratory and innocuous may well betray a dismissive indifference to knowledge and inquiry, which is to say a humiliating, derogatory generalisation. It is for the same reason that, in nearly the same breath, Corbett dismisses also such proponents of "new ethnography" as James Clifford (probably including Tyler and post-modern ethnography) and so-called surreal

anthropology as “overwhelmingly optimistic about the politics of cross-cultural inquiry” (p. 177). Although this may refer to the commitment of post-modern ethnography to the dismissal of objects, observation and description, it would be an oversimplification to liken post-modern ethnography, which at least stipulates an ethical project, too closely to the fourth world.

The opinion of Gonçalo F Cardoso, a musician as well as the manager of Discrepant, is that Laurent Jeanneau’s reworked field recordings “simultaneously [present] an old world, an unknown world, and a place so far away from Western cultural references that one has difficulty describing the sounds they hear” (Cardoso, 2016, p. 320). Cardoso also praises the ability of the music to issue “deep, hypnotic vibes” (2016, p. 320). These descriptions suggest a likening of the experience of Kink Gong to that of fourth world music.

Although he approves of Cowell’s early studies, which “[allowed] Western music to reconsider itself” (p. 169), Corbett regards with pessimism any possibility of politically fruitful intercultural works, whatever their aesthetic achievements. For instance, he would find the efforts of John Zorn to finance musical culture in East Asia ultimately separate from and irrelevant to Zorn’s music itself as an object of analysis.

Corbett’s position seems pessimistically one of cultural exploitation. As a result, he occasionally risks a generalising essentialism of his own. Although he falls short of claiming Orientalism to be inevitable, he offers little more than the strong hint that the Hassells and Cliffords of the world ought to read Said more self-reflectively. His critique of Cage’s conceptual Orientalism depends upon finding harmful Cage’s seeing eastern conceptual approaches as resources rightfully available to him. Yet, especially failing overt exoticism in the music, this critique begins to insist on essentialism without clarifying how cultural identity predetermines conceptual formulations of embodied practice, and the entitlement to use them, or how the transgression of this entitlement enacts harm in specific cases. Is Laurent Jeanneau, being ethnically French, obliged to restrict himself to French, or at least to western, musical methodologies? It would satisfy Alan Bishop for Jeanneau to adapt sampled material and develop it creatively and idiosyncratically, as opposed to reproducing it as his own agency; arguably, Jeanneau mainly succeeds at this on *Tanzania*. If it is inadequate for Corbett, how are such cultural delineations to be drawn and maintained?

Although impish, Corbett is correct to find no fundamental relationship between financing and individual instances of Orientalism. After all, financial support is material; narrative reference is epistemic. Like samples, action draws its importance from discursive

context. Context is thus as important for such action as charitable offsetting as it is for sampling dynamics. Corbett cannot rely on the accusation of inessential connection without committing to the judgement that Zorn gives with one hand and takes with the other. Had Deep Forest shared profits from 'Sweet Lullaby' with the people of Malaita, would it have offset the poetics of exotic primitiveness apparent in the music? Although it is tempting to suggest that this is a question for the people of Malaita, the issue of vindictory negotiation is itself troubled. Some, such as the anthropologist Michael F. Brown (2003), writing on various cases of cultural appropriation, or the sociologist Gabór Vályi (2011), writing on the appropriation of Hungarian vernacular music by the ethnomusicologists and composers Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, have suggested that the best-case scenario is one of negotiation between appropriators and those appropriated. Sensitively to discuss what is at stake with those affected by sampling not only gestures respect but also enables at least the possibility of endorsement. Yet Sider (2009) dismisses as a western conceit the very idea of even negotiation between parties, "as if the rights of vulnerable minorities could be negotiated; as if the negotiations with the dominant state could be mutual" (2009, p. 291). As Rogers, quoted earlier, remarks, the binary of free choice and coercion is inadequate.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

This section specifies the methodological approaches of the study. Section 3.1 specifies the material selected for study (3.1.1) before offering some justification for its selection (3.1.2). Section 3.2 introduces the analytical approaches of Referenzanalysekatalog (3.2.1) and multi-modal critical discourse studies (3.2.2). Considerations of these approaches applied to the selected material follow (3.2.2). The chapter concludes with considerations of the reliability, validity and limitations of the approaches and other factors in the study (3.2.3).

### 3.1 Material analysed and methodology

#### 3.1.1 Material analysed

The primary source of analysis material proposed for this study is the Kink Gong release *Tanzania*, which was released by the London-based independent label Discrepant in June 2015. I have approached the album with the understanding that it comprises a thematic assembly of communicative modes organised according to artistic, commercial and other discursive traditions within the music marketplace. These modes include musical, sonic and other artistic properties of present recorded audio, visual design and sleeve layout, such printed images as cover artwork and such textual references and signifiers as track titles and liner notes.

The selection of *Tanzania* as the primary analysis material owes some amount to its being historically the first of Kink Gong's artistic projects of remixing field recordings to create original soundscapes (Jeanneau, 2015). As the first of its kind in the oeuvre of the artist, *Tanzania* produced a template for an ongoing output of public releases to follow. These releases are all generally characterised by the combination of raw recordings with original electro-acoustic manipulations. Additionally, it happens that *Tanzania* is the Kink Gong release that introduced me to the work of Laurent Jeanneau.

Studying as I sought to do the multi-modality of and discourses surrounding *Tanzania* inevitably draws in additional media material for study. Such material includes press release and review text, online and printed articles, and interviews with the artist. It includes also another release altogether, namely *Music of Tanzania* (SF096); this is a collection of unedited field recordings from Jeanneau's time in Tanzania.

## Methodology

This additional media material was limited. For instance, true perhaps to the sub-cultural status of the experimental-exotic, critical review texts of the two records proved elusive. References to Kink Gong in peer-reviewed academic published work were limited to a reprinted interview within a single volume (Cardoso, 2016). For the purposes of this study, I considered direct correspondence with the artist; ultimately, I decided against this option. Although it has served well such researchers as Steven Feld, Philip Tagg (2013, pp. 196-198) offers at least a few persuasive caveats to the impulse to seek answers on musical meaning from musicians themselves. The analysis of Kink Gong concentrates on discursive contexts – what the music communicates to those “who use the music in particular sociocultural contexts, [those] who negotiate and adapt the music’s meanings after it has left authorial hands” (Tagg, 2013, p. 198) rather than simply abstracting and deferring to ostensible authorial intentions. For this reason, correspondence did not seem an obligatory step.

Nevertheless, correspondence may have yielded useful information on the stance of Jeanneau towards certain pertinent issues. Having to interpret existing interview material, at times to the point of extrapolation, weakens any resulting assertions. I try to take great care in sections of the study that take Jeanneau’s personal perspective into consideration.

### **3.1.2 Justification of material analysed**

Tagg (2015) refers to the so-called access problem of selecting an analytical object for musical analysis. The problem is that the selection of objects and methods can be substantially influenced by such personal factors as the ideology, world view, particular aims and needs of the researcher, as well as the “objective position in a cultural, historical and social context” both of the researcher and the present discipline (2015, p. 7). Moreover, Tagg suggests that it is wise to select an analysis object “conceived for and received by large, socioculturally heterogeneous groups of listeners rather than music used by more exclusive, homogenous groups” (2015, p. 7). When trying to make sense of and offer useful knowledge about a cultural phenomenon, it is certainly more logical to study what is closer to the rule than what is closer to the exception (2015, p. 7). The releases I have selected for study comprise relatively unusual pieces of music, largely confined to a sub-cultural interest in leftfield or experimental exotica. In comparison with more widespread genres of sample-based music, it is possible that the users of King Gong’s music inhabit a more exclusive and homogenous group; it remains unclear precisely what homogenous features such a group might possess. As with researchers simply



## Methodology

choosing material that they personally enjoy, my case study selection bears some risk of esoteric self-indulgence.

At least one justification for studying Kink Gong is that it provides an opportunity to discuss the pertinent problematics of commodification separately from issues of financial exploitation. This assertion emerges from the supposition that the release of *Tanzania* was and remains no financially lucrative endeavour. Moreover, I was intrigued by its extraordinary style of subjecting field recordings of ethnic minority music to emergent electro-acoustic remixes, and by its methodological tendency of avoiding the manipulation of human voices. I expected analysis of these aspects, among others, to yield noteworthy narrative uses of samples. My self-identification as a musician interested both in the sampling continuum and in formulating a referential ethics for sampling practice, as well as of artistic inspiration, also informed the selection of this material.

John Corbett's study (2000) of Orientalism in western experimental and avant-garde music, discussed above (section 2.3.3), might seem similarly hard-pressed to pass rather as a study of a rule than as one of an exception. However, it benefits from temporal distance and exposure beyond sub-culture; many of the composers discussed, including John Cage and Steve Reich, had already enjoyed decades of activity and relative recognition by the time Corbett commenced his study. Cage in particular is among the most influential and well-known experimental western composers of the twentieth century; he is as close to a household name as an avant-garde composer or sound artist is likely to come. Although his analyses are far from what Tagg describes as the "sterile formalism" of traditional musicology (Tagg, 2015, p. 5), Corbett certainly benefits from the canonical association of such composers as Cage and Reich with late western art music, even when this association is one of deliberate scrutiny, irreverence or sabotage. Thus, as unpopular musics go, Corbett has chosen his analysis objects sensibly. Furthermore, the influence of the avant-garde upon popular music, which one might at least partly understand as the assimilation and domestication of novel ideas for cultural capital and commercial growth, is one possible area of socio-historical linkage between Corbett's study and one such as this, in which music largely following the organisational structures of popular music benefits as much from the intellectual credibility of twentieth century avant-garde signification as it does from the ethnomusicological narratives of documentation, preservation and inter-cultural appreciation and the punk narratives of anti-establishment antipathy and irreverence. In addition, Corbett's study concerns Orientalism, the analytical theorisation of the knowledge and cultural representations of the Oriental or eastern 'Other' by the Occidental

## Methodology

or western 'Same'. Clearly, as well as studying the composers, listeners and materials of peculiar, esoteric and culturally niche music, Corbett is investigating the ways in which these composers and their works directly or indirectly express, enlist or take advantage of certain prevailing cultural discourses and ideologies. Moreover, Corbett is investigating the styles and possibilities of artistic interpretation enabled by these discourses.

For the same reasons, while it may appear that the Kink Gong material selected for the present study represents more an insipid and personal indulgence than a serious engagement with a significant cultural phenomenon, it is with reference to several similar topics (Orientalism, appropriation, digital sampling, representation, contextuality, ethnographic display), as well as their relationships to commodifying structures in the music industry, that the present study seeks to examine *Tanzania*. The album was not created in a vacuum; as an artistic creation, its particularities, as well as the narrations that accompany its release as a musical commodity, show that it responds to certain socio-political and cultural conditions. One factor in particular that seems to have influenced Laurent Jeanneau is the constellation of clichés in the world music category. Accordingly, it is one initial assumption of this research that particular details of the music – some of which being what make it so interesting to listen to – can be drawn outwards into wider discourses.

Tagg first wrote of the access problem cited above in 1982. Since then, more precisely since the proliferation of internet access and media distribution as well as media convergence, new platforms of online music distribution have become standardised. Digital music commodities have substantially been replaced by a pervasive commodity-form of subscription-based streaming access (Fleischer, 2017). In tandem, this model has colonised to varying extents the distribution of such other media as film and news. Nevertheless, some digital music retailers, such as Bandcamp, have retained earlier models of selling files as downloads. Releases are structured according to standardised product presentations. Services such as Bandcamp have proved attractive to countless unknown amateurs and prominent labels and signed artists alike. The standard features of Bandcamp releases – albums with one or more track of recorded audio, general or track-specific cover art images, release or publishing dates – generally adhere, with some flexibility, to what can be understood as a traditional pop music format. With most releases adhering to the same release structure, Bandcamp provides a visual example of an equalised commodity format that penetrates, with a reach that crosses music scenes globally, all manner of popular and unpopular styles. I have found this cross-cultural standardisation extremely interesting, chiefly as evidence of the assimilation by a marketplace

environment of musical expressivity itself. Though it may portray itself as a supportive and otherwise neutral platform, Bandcamp's rigid structure represents a powerful corporate influence upon the forms that artistic freedom is permitted to take in public. The point here is that whatever the seeming strangeness of Kink Gong, its release structure is comprehensible and relatable to pop music trends.

### 3.2 Methods

#### 3.2.1 Referenzanalysekatalog

Referenzanalysekatalog (hereafter RAK) is a systematic analytical approach to works of so-called new media, or works whose operation often depends on the practice of sampling, remixing and other recontextualisation. Proposed by Thomas Burkhalter (2015) as a continuation of the research of Peter J. Burkholder, the methods of RAK are adaptable and multi-disciplinary. Chief among these are sonic analysis combined with participant observation, interviews and multi-sited ethnography, as well as so-called digital ethnography, borrowed from cultural studies and ethnomusicology (2015, p. 467). RAK responds directly to the challenges of analysing media works that combine recorded materials without inherent historical, cultural or otherwise contextual connections. Although the contents, contexts, formats and meanings of such works are subject to both immense and continuous variation, RAK is designed and equipped to articulate varying details at multiple levels and stages of production. Thereby, it promises both descriptive categorisation and detailed analysis. RAK presents as a contribution to a history of the most recent developments in artistic borrowing. It offers "a systematic approach to remix culture that observes inter-relations between musical and non-musical levels and highlights discourses and controversies that are at play" (p. 469).

RAK analysis refers to the material sampled in a remix as *reference material*, to the new work that incorporates the sample as a *new media product* and to the artist responsible as the *producer* of the new media product. These are loaded terms. *Reference material* suggests a referential resemblance between the original material and the resulting sample, doubtless because the referential use of samples is more problematic and interesting to critical studies of appropriation art than is the non-referential use of samples. *New media product* assumes the multi-modal dimensions of the work to be more of interest than its fidelity to any one traditional realm of art. Moreover, the words *product* and *producer* situate the material and agency under analysis within markets of exchange.

## Methodology

Burkhalter suggests (p. 468) that a minimal application of the RAK model would entail six levels of inquiry, branching from descriptive categorisation towards specific discursive analysis. I have extrapolated the following summary from research questions suggested by Burkhalter. First, *analytical focus* identifies the reference material. Second, *sampling* specifies both the technological means of sampling and the selection of the reference material. Third, *aesthetical remix strategies* identifies the technology used to undertake sampling and the means by and extent to which the reference material is edited and manipulated. Fourth, *symbolic processing strategies* considers the symbolic display of relationships between the producer and the reference material; it assesses the position of the new media work in relation to the reference material, specifies whether or not the reference material is openly cited by the producer, and considers the producer's knowledge about and relationships both personal and narrative with the reference material. Fifth, *habitus and commodification* examines the material conditions under which the new media product was produced, the market platforms across which it is distributed and discussed and the new meanings that become associated with the reference material as a result of commodification. Additionally, this section notes the geographical location and socio-economic, cultural, educational and gender background of the producer. Finally, *legal and ethical matters* considers any questions of ethics and legality surrounding the media product.

As a methodological approach to the present study, one clear advantage of RAK is its specific tailoring to the analysis of sample-based music. Moreover, RAK approaches this task broadly from a cultural studies perspective while remaining open to inter-disciplinary combination. Its systematic points of inquiry allow both overall summary and discrete discussion of particular issues. As well as seeming an appropriate approach for analysing *Tanzania*, RAK offers some promise of a credible research context for the present study.

RAK accommodates adjustment according to particular research requirements. For those of this study, I made several adjustments. First, I added further scope for description and analysis both of the original material created by the producer and of the context of interaction between the remixed reference material and the original material. Specifically, I added a sub-section that describes diagrammatically the original material that the producer contributes to the new media product (section 4.1.1).

Second, I expanded the sub-section *Editing and manipulation* into *Editing, manipulation and interaction with original material* (section 4.1.3). This expands the detailed description of

editing and manipulation techniques to include that of their interaction with the original material of the producer. This permits analysis of the authorial agency of the producer in using both reference and original material to communicate meanings through the new media product. This modification more comprehensively links aesthetical remix strategies (section 4.1.3) to symbolic processing strategies (section 4.1.4).

Third, I describe and discuss not only sonic but also visual and textual material in turn throughout each stage of analysis to which they correspond. Burkhalter's definition of music as "a media product" acknowledges the influence upon musical perception of such non-musical information as cover art, titles and media appearances of the musician (2015, p. 468). A clearer categorical analysis of non-musical material serves this definition of music.

Fourth, to section 4.1.4 I added the sub-section *Ethnographic translation*, which considers the conspicuous and significant lack of ethnographic translation for reference material throughout *Tanzania*.

### **3.2.2 Multi-modal critical discourse studies (MCDS)**

Multi-modal critical discourse studies (hereafter MCDS) is an analytical methodology focussed on the ways in which the communication of messages or ideas can result from combinations of various modes of expression. In their book *Music as Multimodal Discourse*, Way and McKerrell (2017) define a *mode* as "a socially agreed channel of communication" (2017, p. 7). Multi-modality understands communication in texts, art and other media as occurring across multiple modes. In applying MCDS to the study of musical material, one expects to analyse formal musical modes such as rhythm, tonality and instrumentation in combination with such other modes of media as text, lyrics, images, spaces and stage presence. Thereby, rather than studying different musical and non-musical modes in isolation, MCDS studies how discourses may manifest in the temporal interactions and combinations of such modes. This is how the various contributors to *Music as Multimodal Discourse* proceed with their investigations.

In essence, MCDS applies critical discourse analysis (hereafter CDA) to the concept of multi-modality. CDA is an interdisciplinary method of studying the broad articulation of ideology in texts. It understands a text as a means of recontextualising representations of social practices. The new contexts into which the text places these representations contain the interests, goals and values of certain perspectives. Therefore, examining the ways in which recontextualisation affects these representations may reveal knowledge about the ideological stance of the text

## Methodology

towards certain social discourses (Way & McKerrell, 2017, p. 5). Way and McKerrell understand discourse as a “[model] of the world ... [projecting] certain social values and ideas which contribute to the (re)production of social life” (2017, p. 5). A text may engage with multiple discourses at varying degrees of conspicuousness.

CDA fundamentally concerns “opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (2017, p. 6). It is intended to expose in texts the communication of discourses, particularly those concerning unbalanced distributions of power. It studies literature as a technology of representing the social structure of power, of how writers and performers of texts comprehend, legitimise and criticise its unequal distribution between parties. MCDS inherits this interest in inequality and the ways in which combinations of modes articulate discourses about social problems concerning power. Naturally, media can be disposed positively, negatively, indifferently or complexly towards the discourses they directly or indirectly invoke. With their political sympathies on board, among the tasks of MCDS is to unpack and discuss the relationships between modes and ideologies.

Way and McKerrell situate MCDS within a gradual trend of music studies away from formalist musicological preoccupations with ontologically robust works and towards relativism and studies of the ways in which music is interpreted and used by listeners as part of social life (2017, p. 2). Historically, this has been accompanied by increasing scholarly interest in popular music. Of work in this trend, they themselves cite as examples H. M. Berger, Michael Tenzer, John Roeder, Philip Tagg and Allan Moore (see also DiNora, 2000 and Krueger, 2009).

As an example of MCDS in practice, in the second chapter of *Music as Multimodal Discourse* Eriksson and Machin examine the ideological use of music in one episode of a Swedish reality television series to “ridicule working-class participants’ behaviours, ideas and lifestyles” (Eriksson & Machin 2017, p. 23). The researchers situate the series within an ideological trend towards neoliberalism in Sweden, suggesting that it commits neither to harmless fun nor to sympathetic representation. Instead, it exploits working-class people as a group to be ridiculed in isolation from wider structural trends, rather than contextualised within them. The researchers observe that the genre of reality TV in general “play[s] an important role in the naturalization and legitimation of these discourses” (p. 23). Multiple modes express this discursive orientation in the series in question. Such aspects as high production value and representations of enjoyment flatter participants while such others as excessively dramatic

depictions of ordinary events and patronising middle-class programme narration are unflattering (p. 29). Such mixed messages may serve both to obscure the project of ridicule from working-class viewers and to widen viewer demographics by humouring the prejudices of working- and middle-class viewers alike.

In their musical analysis, Eriksson and Machin note the meaning potentials of various kinds of musical information, which they draw mainly from Deryck Cooke's *The Language of Music* (1959). For instance, even rhythms can be associated with conformity and ease; uneven rhythms with creativity and difficulty (Eriksson and Machin, 2017, p. 30, Table 2.1). Fast rhythms have connotations of hurry and energy; slow rhythms of leisure, lack of energy and patience (p. 30). With pitch and tonality, high pitches are usually associated positively with brightness, happiness and energy and negatively with lightweight or trivial meanings; lower pitches are usually associated positively with importance, solidness, relaxedness or closeness and negatively with clumsiness, depression and danger (p. 31, Table 2.2). The tables refer too to pitch ranges, with wider ranges suggesting expansive emotions and open, subjective messages; lower ranges tending to convey more objective, contained and emotionally repressed messages (p. 32, Table 2.3). Using this information, Eriksson and Machin observe both modes that flatter and modes that ridicule the working-class participants in the programme. The "kind of 1950s style rock'n'roll piece" (p. 29) of the programme's title sequence uses a "side-to-side and carefree" rhythm as well as several relaxed, harmonious vocal melodies with narrow pitch ranges to convey lightness and pleasure (pp. 29-32). Yet later, the quaint and militaristic leitmotif of one participant both accentuates and teases his ostensibly "petty, controlling nature" in place of a fairer explanation of his motives (p. 37).

### **3.2.3 RAK and MCDS applied to Kink Gong**

If nothing else, RAK applied to Kink Gong promises to generate various degrees of knowledge, of a particular contemporary practice of sampling, in response to the paradigm of the reference catalogue. Provided that fidelity to this paradigm falls short of preoccupation with universal knowledge, RAK is an appealing point of departure for specific and informed research.

Owing to the methodology proposed, analysis of *Tanzania* is limited neither to the objective properties of the releases nor even to a strict structural delineation of the materials of which a release might consist. Although such delineation is both useful and necessary for this study, an excessive prioritisation of the objective properties of a release risks the impoverishing prejudices of formalism. Naturally, the purpose of MCDS in this study is to avoid analysing the

## Methodology

music in isolation from socio-historical listening contexts. This is in order better to study relations between the music and ideology, discourse and communication. In any case, even if formalistic analysis were untroubled by the misapprehensions of traditional musicology, the music of Kink Gong is not art music and lacks formal notation; it certainly does not belong to the realm of pure aesthetics. This is another way in which Kink Gong's musical orientation links to that of other artists in popular music traditions.

Thus, an application of MCDS to Kink Gong might be expected to identify one or more problems, perhaps including a group who 'suffers the most', as well as specify those in power, those who are responsible and those with the means and opportunity to solve the problems. In this case, the central problem is the representation, via manipulated samples, of an ethnic minority culture. This is in terms less of quantifiable economic exploitation than of artistic agency and power as well as ideologically within pop music systems of commodity exchange. The task is to study the multi-modality of the material to expose communications, one way or another, on this problem. In specifying 'those in power' as well as those with the means and opportunity to solve the problem, I propose examining the agency of Kink Gong, exotic music labels and consumers as well as that of the musicians and phenomena sampled by the artist. This is to say that applying MCDS to the three selected works of Kink Gong requires that they be placed, just as Eriksson and Machin place *Böda Camping*, into a clear socio-political context from a clear political perspective. In this case, the socio-political context entails several poles. One is the depictive, semi- or so-called punk-ethnographic representation of non-western – Tanzanian, Chinese and South East Asian – cultures by a western recordist. Another is the artist's continued recontextualisation of such cultures, or at least of discrete cultural encounters, in the form of electro-acoustically modified recordings. These pertain to discourses of aesthetic and metaphorical representations of cultural domination, as well as nationhood and artistic authenticity. Another related pole is the commercial exchange of such recordings, within a primarily Anglo-European independent music marketplace, by way of such standardised commercial structures as physical format pressings, online record shops, textual press release information and the use of categorical tags such as "africa", "global", "soundscape", "experimental" and "exotica". These pertain to wider structural discourses of economic and artistic cultural exploitation, exotica and the western-centric delineation of "world music" in general.



### 3.2.4 Reliability, validity and limitations

Although an untroubling target of RAK analysis, Kink Gong is a less persuasive choice for MCDS. Consider that case studies in the book *Music as Multimodal Discourse* tend to deal with more upfront (and, in popular discourse, consequential) examples of power abuse and ideological manipulation. While Eriksson and Machin concern themselves with humiliating and otherwise manipulative depictions of working-class people, John E. Richardson studies recontextualisation and fascist music; van Leeuwen discusses the manipulative features of the so-called sonic logos of branded advertising. Elsewhere, Aileen Dillane, Martin J. Power and Eoin Devereux study the multi-modal treatment of class disgust in a Morrissey song.

Unlike each of these examples, the music of Kink Gong is, as communication, directed less towards any one social or socio-economic group. Nevertheless, the music depicts politically important (because colonised, dominated, vanishing or otherwise vulnerable to exotic signification) communities more or less directly by way of sampling. In so doing, the music immediately enters an area of ongoing discussion, theorisation, and politicisation regarding inter-cultural power relations, post-colonial critique, sampling ethics and commodification. The ways in which the music links inextricably to these issues, as well as directly or indirectly negotiates with them, present vaguely appropriate conditions for MCDS.

Finally, there is some degree of tension hitherto unacknowledged between RAK and MCDS. The emphasis of the former on cataloguing various conditions and discourses pertaining to sampling entails a more general approach than might be expected or even required of the latter. My neglecting to resolve this tension is likely the chief reason for the relegation of MCDS to analytical reference.

## Chapter 4: Analysis, discussion and synthesis

This chapter begins, in section 4.1, with the subjection of *Tanzania* to six stages of RAK analysis; each stage corresponds to those outlined in the previous chapter (section 3.2.1). Each stage entails descriptive analysis, some of which are followed by critical discussion and synthesis pertaining to my research questions and research aims. Section 4.2 concludes the paper by relating findings to the research questions RQ1 and RQ2 as well as by offering some final remarks.

### 4.1 *Tanzania*

#### 4.1.1 Analytical focus

*Reference material: audio recordings.* As described in brief sleeve notes, the music of *Tanzania* comprises “a mix of unedited acoustic recordings with computer modified [*sic*] parts” (Jeanneau, 2015). Chiefly, Jeanneau here refers to his own field recordings made between December 1999 and March 2000 (Sublime Frequencies, n.d.). Most of these recordings depict Hadza bushpeople of North Tanzania. Although much of this material features musical performances using voice or malimba thumb piano, Jeanneau stresses in the press release for *Tanzania* that altogether he “gathered all kinds of sounds, not only music, that expresses [*sic*] proximity” (Jeanneau, *Discrepant - Kink Gong - Tanzania LP*, n.d.). Indeed, many sounds cited on the rear panel of the record sleeve capture not music as such but voices, either explicitly (“HADZA men voices”, “HADZA child’s voice”) or indirectly (“weed smoking [*sic*] man”). Other non-musical and environmental sounds are audible throughout the tracks of the album. The relationship between such material and ‘proximity’ I understand to be one giving a sense of intimacy, common-sense realism and authenticity, that is, of being-there and being-with. I expect to analyse such material with these fetish-properties in mind.

Other than Hadza, the reference material includes a recorded Muslim ceremony held in Msimbati, Mtwara, South Tanzania. Another brief recording features an Uighur drum; still another features a “rammer”.<sup>6</sup>

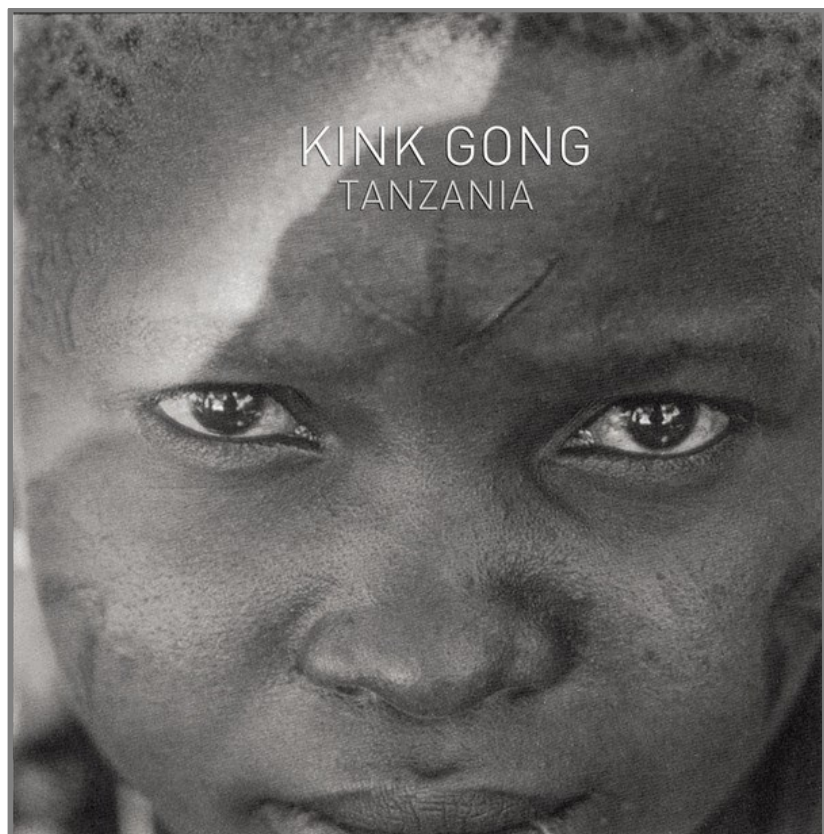
Like the rest of his extensive library, Jeanneau’s intact, unabridged field recordings of Tanzanian music are available to purchase from his website on CD-R format and from his

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<sup>6</sup> Regrettably, in neither the text nor the audio itself is it evident to me whether this refers to the pneumatic tool commonly of the same name or to some other sound source.

Bandcamp site in various digital formats. The Tanzania collection includes four volumes of Hadza music and one of music of Mtwara, which features also Makonde ceremonial recordings. Still another volume comprises Datooga songs recorded in North Tanzania. For *Tanzania*, Jeanneau sampled only the Hadza and some Mtwara material; on the document work *Music of Tanzania*, released as a double-vinyl record in early 2015 by Sublime Frequencies, excerpts from each of Jeanneau's Tanzania volumes are present.

Both *Music of Tanzania* and *Tanzania* feature sleeve photography by James Stephenson, a US-born specialist in East African art. Jeanneau and Stephenson visited the Hadza together (Jeanneau, Discrepant - Kink Gong - Tanzania LP, n.d.). Consequently, Jeanneau's field recordings and Stephenson's photography share an unspecified degree of historicity and representational simultaneity. Nonetheless, probably no more were Stephenson's photos taken specifically for *Tanzania* than were Jeanneau's recordings made specifically and opportunistically for sampling; the press release implies that each was an independent pursuit with its own project of documenting, after a fashion, Hadza people and culture.



**Figure 1** *Tanzania* cover photograph by James Stephenson (Jeanneau, 2015)

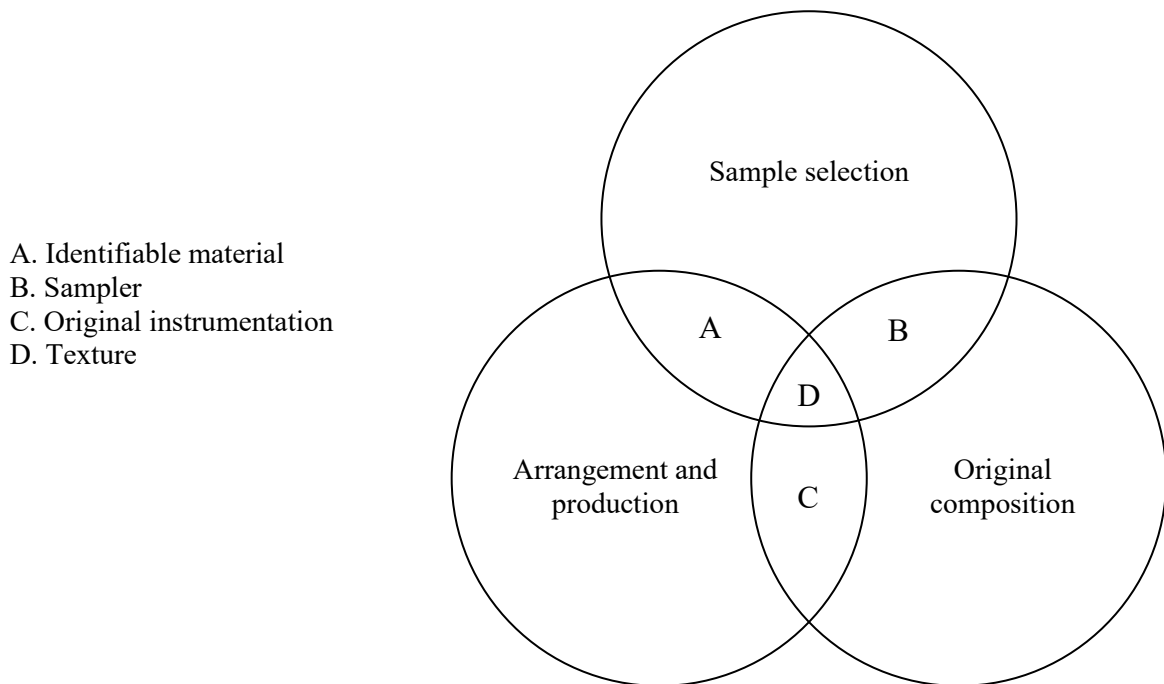
*Reference material: photography and visual design.* Three monochrome photographs accompany the music of *Tanzania*. The most prominent of these, in that it serves both as the cover art (Fig. 1) and as the side B label of the vinyl record, is a close portrait of a Hadza child. The second photograph, printed on the rear panel of the record sleeve, depicts three Hadza, one of whom masked and distinctively clad.<sup>7</sup> The final photograph, printed on the side A label of the vinyl record, depicts a Hadza man smiling while holding up for display the decapitated head of an impala.<sup>8</sup> No information accompanies any of the photos to explain or contextualise their contents (see *Ethnographic translation*, section 4.1.4).

*Original musical activity.* Without elaboration, the rear sleeve describes most of the original contributions of Jeanneau to *Tanzania* only as “electronic” material. Consequently, the following summary is substantially the result of my own analysis, interpretation and extrapolation. I count three general categories of original musical activity in *Tanzania*, namely sample selection, original composition, and arrangement and production. Sample selection refers to the creative selection and implementation of reference material. Original composition refers to writing and recording original musical material. Arrangement and production refer generally to the creative use of effects, to mixing, and to other pre-master production and engineering activities. Although an oversimplification of qualitative distinctions, the resulting diagram (Fig. 2) clearly illustrates the interaction of these three sets.

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<sup>7</sup> On the sleeve, this photo is cropped substantially. A fuller image, featuring six more individuals, is visible on the official website of James Stephenson (African and Tribal Art Dealer - James Stephenson African Art, n.d.). In this version, the performer is central and surrounded.

<sup>8</sup> Although unspecified on the sleeve of *Tanzania*, the title of this photograph is *Mustaffa with Head*. It appears accompanied by the title on the official website of James Stephenson (Mustaffa with Head - James Stephenson African Art, n.d.).



**Figure 2** Interaction of original musical activity throughout *Tanzania*

The crossover of sample selection and arrangement and production (region A) includes reference material that remains recognisable or at least identifiable in its new context. Identifiable material without referential function too falls into this region. The crossover of sample selection and original composition (region B) includes the sampler instrument, the typical function of which being to sequence a sample (usually with chromatically quantised tonal pitch control). The crossover of original composition and arrangement and production (region C) includes such original instrumentation as the electronic malimba of ‘Shitani’ (track A1), which finds Jeanneau so patching an electronic instrument voice as to approximate the timbres of a malimba. Other apparently original instrumentation includes both the synthesiser voice of ‘Motomoto (fire)’ (track A3) and the acoustic Uighur drum of ‘Dap’<sup>9</sup> (track A2). Finally, the crossover of all three sets (region D) includes the diverse use of samples as texture indirectly, incompletely (or altogether non-)referential. By such texture I refer to sounds clearly representing electro-acoustically nothing in particular, betraying an indulgence in raw textural

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<sup>9</sup> The incongruous appearance of the Uighur drum on this album, credited to no particular performer and citing neither an occasion nor a location, implies Jeanneau himself to be its performer.

experimentation, or otherwise contributing an indirect evocation of space, context or intimacy.

The above representation of Jeanneau's original contributions suggests that, consistent with the tendencies of appropriation art, his personal authorial activity on *Tanzania* generally consists more of techniques of electro-acoustic sample selection, manipulation, arrangement and mixing than of original recorded performance.

#### 4.1.2 Sampling

*Input.* Although no expository material associated directly with *Tanzania* specifies the means by which the reference material was originally recorded, Jeanneau states in an interview for the online magazine *Pop Matters* (Gibson, 2018) that he began his operations with a Minidisc recorder and a pair of Shure microphones.

*Selection.* The rear panel of the record sleeve is only vaguely informative in its track-by-track summaries of the reference material sampled.<sup>10</sup> The most prominent samples comprise spoken or sung Hadza voices. Sampled speech may be cited specifically as male ('Shitani', 'Amnashida [no problem]' [track B2], 'Malimba') [track B3], as juvenile ('Aono' [track A4], 'Amnashida [no problem]') or as mixed ('Dap', 'Ganogoko' [track B1]). The tracks 'Motomoto (fire)', 'Epeme (moonless night ceremony)' (track A5) and 'Ganogoko' variously contain samples of ceremonial speech and song. Aside from Hadza voices, Jeanneau samples malimba performances ('Dap', 'Amnashida [no problem]', 'Malimba') as well as the Uyghur drum and rhammer (both 'Dap') mentioned in section 4.1.1. 'Ganogoko' contains samples of dance steps, a drum of the town of Mbulu, North Tanzania and a flute of the Mtwara Muslim ceremony mentioned in section 4.1.1.

Aside from the material specified on the record sleeve, it is evident both from listening to the album and from reading the official press release that Jeanneau welcomes some amount of peripheral sound in the reference material. The samples present on *Tanzania* include many unidentified and momentary non- or extra-musical sounds. Some samples consist only of such material. Whether the origin of the sound is clear or unclear varies by sample. Although such material detracts in a traditionally ontological sense from the realism of the music, these sounds

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<sup>10</sup> Discrepancies show in the printing of several titles between the vinyl and digital editions of *Tanzania*. Without explanation, the track titled 'Dap' on the record sleeve is titled 'Per' on the digital version; meanwhile, the respective digital counterparts to 'Motomoto (fire)', 'Epeme (moonless night ceremony)' and 'Amnashida (no problem)' are 'Motomotoo', 'Epeme' and 'Amnashidam'. For the sake of consistency, if too at the risk of error, this paper defers to the titles printed on the record sleeve.

contribute to a sense of space, social ambiance and intimacy. Thus, in a less traditional sense, they extend the realism of the album. They stack and overemphasise the grain of the recording space, that is, materials betraying physicality through temporality. It is probably to such connotations that Jeanneau refers when, as quoted above, he considers such material to express *proximity*. He welcomes only some material, avoiding outright interruptions and obstructions to music and intimacy, such as the disruptive passing of traffic (Gibson, 2018) or excessive evidence of his own presence. Section 4.1.3 (*Editing, manipulation and interaction with original material*) discusses the instrumental significance for sampling assumed by this peripheral grit.

#### **4.1.3 Aesthetical remix strategies**

*Technology.* Without engaging in direct correspondence with Jeanneau, it is impossible to state with certainty anything more specific than that, over the years between 2000 and 2010, he sampled the collected reference material using at least one digital audio workstation installed on at least one computer.

*Editing, manipulation and interaction with original material.* Based on close listening episodes, the primary techniques of manipulation on *Tanzania* include attenuated volume, stereo panning, looping delay, sample scrubbing (whereby a narrow, looping window shifts in a given direction and at a given speed across the duration of a sample), collage, reversed running direction, altered playback speed, stereo filtering, re-pitching, reverberation and sampler instrumentation. Occasionally, there is evidence of phaser effects ('Malimba') and sample rate reduction ('Ganogoko'). Throughout *Tanzania*, the sounds processed using these techniques are complex and dynamic. Although they convey often continuous and erratic motion, they are seldom layered or maintained sufficiently to exhaust the listener.

Conspicuously, Jeanneau leaves nearly all Hadza voices untransformed. In such tracks as 'Ganogoko', he creates collages of voices as well as subjecting others to looping delay. The timbre of a drone in the same piece suggests derivation from a high-frequency vocal sample. Aside from such instances, Jeanneau allows voices to speak and sing in long sequences, sometimes looping, without overwhelming interruption or transformation. Although the re-pitching of samples is a widespread electro-acoustic technique – and the re-pitching of voices a particularly common practice in contemporary electronic music – Jeanneau declines to adopt it. Clearly, the decision to edit voices sparingly is methodological. It reconciles electro-acoustic

experimentation with human voices as a matter of taste, allowing the presentation of both at the expense of neither. Moreover, it gestures towards an ethical index for the limits on sampling practice, with Hadza, represented as voices, lying beyond them. It questions the adulteration of what is typically seen as a basic and direct source of human expression and positions voices as the primary focal point for listening. Meanwhile, Jeanneau's presence appears more occupied with possessing only non-vocal, peripheral material. There is certainly a question of fetishising and primitivising the voice, as if it remains able to disclose an authentic selfhood already lost to the west (Chanan, 1994).

On such tracks as 'Motomoto (fire)' and 'Epeme (moonless night ceremony)' the continued intactness of voices allows Jeanneau to compose harmonising melodies for new synthesiser and sampler accompaniments. In the former piece, he accompanies *epeme* dialogue and song with revolving sequences of arpeggiated synthesiser notes and percussion. The harmonics of the synthesiser voice as well as the effects to which it is subjected, including stereo delays, result in an elastic texture with a dynamic stereo image. In cadence with skittering, high-frequency percussion, this accentuates the busy and social atmosphere of the original sample. The tone is lively if peculiar alongside the reference material, in which voices sing together as well as engage in conversation and laughter.

Of all the tracks on *Tanzania*, 'Epeme (moonless night ceremony)' features the most melodic use of a sampler. Alongside spoken and sung Hadza voices, Jeanneau dubs a quantised sample, short and rapidly looping, in a melodic sequence. To the ceremonial clapping this offers a stuttering rhythmic counterpoint; to the singing voices, it offers a bass-range harmony, albeit one with unexpected harmonics. Although the short sound used as the voice of the sampler is difficult to identify, it resembles no human voice.<sup>11</sup> Whatever its origin, in the harmony of its new role it provides an enthusiastic and appreciative participation in the song. Is Jeanneau inserting himself undesirably into a foreign ritual? Is his unrequested contribution a humiliating approximation? It is the album's strongest example of Jeanneau's using samples to reconfigure both his own agency and that of Hadza; as they speak and sing, Jeanneau joins them without interrupting, offering for his part no crude or insulting approximation of Hadza performance. Instead, in a manner somewhat deferential, he embodies peripheral matter (by harnessing the sampler, the instrumental technology more familiar to him).

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<sup>11</sup> At a guess, Jeanneau fashioned it from resonant percussion.



While the acoustic impossibility of the reorganised recordings emphasises the fictionality of *Tanzania*, the meanings that emerge from them emphasise its fantastical importance. Jeanneau apparently reimagines encounters between himself and Hadza by reconstructing them as electro-acoustic and musical fantasies. In combining electro-acoustic texture and textuality with intact recordings of the musical and social activity of Hadza, these reconstructions invite transcultural (if any) classification. The music appears even to pursue the evocation of a non-privileging cultural holism. This is an ideal familiar to post-modern ethnography, and at times, the album displays what almost resembles an interest in post-modern ethnographic experience. For instance, it cultivates the impression of fragmentary collaboration and textual polyvocality, resisting the representation of Hadza as such, and avoiding descriptive textuality (see section 4.1.4). The album's eschewing popular musical form in favour of evocative soundscape helps develop this unusual, holistic, non-representational fantasy; at its best, the work signifies emergent fantasy by way of electro-acoustic impossibility.

However, this evocation in *Tanzania* begins already with imaginary circumstances. The textuality of the music does represent people themselves less than it does a discourse of undescribed proximity, common-sense realism and collaboration. Yet Jeanneau's is the final (if not only) organising influence on the composition and construction of *Tanzania*, a presumption owing not least to the epistemic preoccupations of the (non-)pop music landscape the album circulates. Prior to the album's commercial release, he exercises total control over its authorial textuality. As lack of description alone cannot substitute for lack of representation, the textualisation of *Tanzania* is fatally non-participatory. Although Hadza may appear enabled, uninterrupted and even undocumented, the ensuing text is only Jeanneau's. In other words, Jeanneau assumes responsibility for constructing polyphony (in the sense of pluralistic activity), rather than allowing it to arise from truly conducive circumstances; the result is a monophonic, atemporal fantasy of polyphony. It thus resembles Jon Hassell's fourth world music in the sense of its fantastical, utopian indulgences. At the same time, it textually situates the conditions of the music; Jeanneau's samples do not signify the merely undifferentiated, non-committal exotic. Although descriptively sparse, they recall, if only vaguely, specific communities and events.

In summary, Jeanneau's remix strategies consist of various techniques. They display non-referential textural composition as well as simulating musical collaboration between Jeanneau and Hadza. His methodology appears to consider the ethical implications of manipulating and displaying Hadza material. Moreover, the overall orientation of the album towards

unconventional electro-acoustic soundscape helps to avoid the referential tendency of popular style, which is probably one way in which Jeanneau can distance his music from more clearly harmful or problematically fetishised exotica (see section 4.1.4).

*Visual editing.* Aside from its ensuring that displayed Hadza, as people, remain essentially intact, the visual presentation of *Tanzania* offers no obvious analogical index of the relatively unconventional style of the music. Its photography could just as well function as the sleeve of either a purely ethnographic document<sup>12</sup> or even of a more typical pop record seeking to associate itself in some way with a visual depiction of Hadza culture. The primary methods of manipulation applied to the photos are cropping and textual overlay; there is no process analogous of raw texture. On the front cover, the face of the child is overlaid with the artist name and release title in block capitals. All beyond the child's hairline (upwards), temples (sideways) and upper lip (downwards) are cropped. Typically for portraiture, the eyes are the primary focal point; each eye occupies a third on the horizontal plane and a central position on the vertical plane. As one of the few areas of the photograph in which text placement obstructs no primary facial features, the centre of the child's forehead, just above customary markings, is a somewhat explicable position for the textual material of artist name and release title. This layout is consistent with the placement of corresponding text on the covers of other Kink Gong albums released by Discrepant, such as *Xinjiang* (Jeanneau, 2011), *Voices* (Jeanneau, 2013) and *Gongs* (Jeanneau, 2014); on each cover, as here, the text is positioned upper-centrally, in capitals and in the same sans-serif font style.

Such techniques as collage applied to the photographs might have offered a closer technical reflection of those Jeanneau applies to his field recordings. Yet as with undisturbed vocal samples, intact photographs are more likely to humanise and express respect than modified images. Cut up and recombined, they risk irreverence and excessive ambiguity. A more punkish explanation might point towards Jeanneau's subversion of the commercial clichés of world music; the humble and humanising imagery of *Tanzania*, the likes of which being often prominently positioned in the visual presentation of world music products, barely hints at the incongruously unconventional musical material within.

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<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the cover art of *Music of Tanzania* itself comprises another close Hadza portrait. Stephenson's web site reveals the title of this photograph to be *Girl with Circles* (Girl with Circles - James Stephenson African Art, n.d.).

On the rear panel of the album's cover sleeve, the cropped photograph of three Hadza is overlaid by the texts of a track list, liner notes and credits. Other than such formal imprint information as the catalogue number, all text is positioned in the space above the subjects' heads, where it fails to obstruct viewer engagement with the subjects.

#### 4.1.4 Symbolic processing strategies

*Positioning.* It is difficult to see Jeanneau's position in relation to his reference material as anything but positive, even deferential.

*Knowledge.* As the individual who recorded the reference material and who discloses contextual information about it in accompanying notes, Jeanneau possesses first-hand knowledge of the reference material. He has suggested that, with nearly all his recordings, he is the only westerner able while listening to visualise the people and environments they depict (Rusu, 2018).

*Citation.* Jeanneau cites the reference material openly at several opportunities. Although the title of the album refers generally to the country in which the reference material was obtained, textual material ranging from the sleeve notes of the album to its accompanying press release make explicit reference to Hadza as the foremost performers and subjects of the reference material as well as to the period in which recordings took place. Nevertheless, the sleeve notes of *Tanzania* disclose considerably less information than do those of *Music of Tanzania*. This is one of several elements (see *Relation and narrative* below) that contribute on the one hand to the personally artistic character of the former release and, on the other hand, to the more serious, semi-ethnographic narrative of the latter release.

As noted above, none of the photographs distributed across the album packaging is titled, captioned or otherwise annotated. Although their representing Hadza is self-evident, any further interpretation must receive the images at face value. This is a marked departure from traditional standards of ethnography; taken as part of the punk ethnographic continuum, or even simply as pop music presentation, it is less surprising.

*Ethnographic translation.* The majority of those who consume *Tanzania*, encountering its sounds, images and text, will lack familiarity with Hadza culture, language and music. The ethnographic display of other cultures traditionally places great importance on the

contextualising practice of translation (see Lidchi, 1997); in anthropology, Miller puts this as “smoothing space (fostering cross-cultural understanding through relativism)” (1993, p. 12). *Translation* here is less a technical reference to a linguistic process than a general one to the decoding and reconstruction of meanings in relative terms familiar to the expected audience of (western) readers or listeners. To translate is to rewrite, and as a site of the transmission of rewritten knowledge, translation exudes power and authority over the representation and thereby also the construction of ethnic identity. As Tyler fundamentally puts it, “[the] whole ideology of representational signification is an ideology of power” (Tyler, 1986, p. 131). As a discursive and grammatical technology, translation lends itself as readily to the exploitation and controlling of other cultures as ostensibly it does to understanding and accepting them.

Although Jeanneau both distances his activities from orthodox ethnographic practice and indeed is critical of ethnomusicologists (Gibson, 2018), some overlap with ethnographic display persists on his released field recordings. On *Music of Tanzania*, for instance, liner notes describe *epeme* as well as other ceremonies. In contrast, *Tanzania* lacks any substantial effort at translation. Of course, such omission too is an expression of power, knowledge and disposition. It provocatively renounces the received responsibility of the ethnographer further to disclose and contextualise those displayed in the reference material. Vocally in pursuit more of feeling than of information, Jeanneau perhaps considers translation a conceptual obstruction to the experience of emotional or even hedonistic proximity. After all, he presents *Tanzania* not as a neutral document but as his own experimental music, in which he seems to examine the nebulous abstraction of reimagining his own cultural encounter with Hadza more than the ethnic identity of Hadza themselves. In other words, *Tanzania* is (in this narrow sense) an inappropriate venue for ethnographic authority. Although here is another way in which the album proves vaguely suggestive of post-modern ethnography, the relationship is likely unintended. With its technological fascination with human embodiment and intimacy, its various combined uses of samples, many of which only indirectly if at all referential, and its fantastical and stylistic ambiguity, *Tanzania* is substantially post-modern, new media material. Yet to me it is more likely that the album subverts perfunctory, commodified ethnographic description and shallow world music stereotypes more by *excluding* ethnography than by contemplating an alternative form of ethnography.

Provocative and grassroots as it may be, *Music of Tanzania* still concentrates on ethnic objects of observation. Jeanneau troubles to translate more dutifully in its expository liner notes (Jeanneau, MUSIC OF TANZANIA | kinkgong, n.d.). He acknowledges that, while *Music of*

*Tanzania* is an ostensibly factual, semi-ethnographic document, *Tanzania* is an artistic appropriation and reinterpretation of the reference material, substituting simulation, metaphor and personal reflection (see section 4.1.3 above) for more neutral, uninterrupted documentation. In interviews, Jeanneau discusses the relationship between these two ways of presenting the same recordings as well as stressing the importance of listening to both: “*I encourage you to ... compare the original and the remix. That’s ... what I can do in terms of respect. Having two approaches of listening to this music*” (Rusu, 2018, emphasis added). The original, however outwardly uninterested in traditional ethnography, more closely resembles a portrait of Hadza people as informative historical documentation; the remix rather resembles a work of historical-fantastical dramatisation. *Music of Tanzania* thus promises some degree of representation without disrespectful interruption or transcultural augmentation. I judge that, in so doing, it partly fulfils a vindictory function on behalf of the sampling practice in its derivative, *Tanzania*. Despite this, although *Tanzania* and *Music of Tanzania* were released within months of one another, neither acknowledges the other in its press release or liner notes. There is no obvious coordinated correspondence between Discrepant and Sublime Frequencies in displaying the relationship between the two releases. As *Tanzania* is a media product straying into sensitive discourses around the appropriation and display of cultural materials, its relationship to a separate document in circulation (and the affiliations of its authors) could probably have been more clearly established without harming any punkish integrity – and ought to have risked such harm in so doing.

#### *Relation, narrative and imagery*

When expressing his art, lifestyle and methodology in interviews, press releases and sleeve notes, Jeanneau repeatedly adopts narratives of artistic authenticity. These underscores a broad justification of Jeanneau’s lifestyle and artistic practice. The most prominent features of the narratives are Jeanneau’s seeming self-awareness as a roving, privileged westerner, his being the recordist of the reference material, his great respect for and personal engagement with those he records, his hierarchical organisation of his own musical work below the field recordings from which it derives (see above), and finally his distaste for the ideological practices and connotations of commercialism.

As a travelling westerner, Jeanneau reflects that “with a French passport I could go pretty much everywhere I wanted, being poorer than how local people perceived me but having time and a great feeling of freedom” (Gibson, 2018). He adds that he had “wanted to live in exotic,

hot, underdeveloped, cheap places where life was uncomplicated” (Gibson, 2018). This acknowledgment of privilege serves to emphasise that Jeanneau is aware of the dynamics of power that have enabled many aspects of his lifestyle.

Jeanneau’s being the recordist of all reference material at least circumvents possible legal commitments associated with sampling recorded material (see section 4.1.6 below). Meanwhile, his having personally visited and enthusiastically spent time with those he records underlies his claim both to a sympathetic personal interest in their cultures and to some first-hand knowledge – however orientated from the outsider perspective of the westerner-documenter – of what takes place during each recording. In the liner notes to *Music of Tanzania*, Jeanneau elaborates on the authenticity of his fleeting relationship with Hadza.

You can only understand people once you ve [*sic*] shared their way of life, even if James and me always had the option to leave after loosing [*sic*] kilos in the bush, we walked with them, James played the hunter and spoke broken swahili [*sic*] with them and they respected him for coming back every year. (Jeanneau, MUSIC OF TANZANIA | kinkgong, n.d.)

These comments suggest that a gesture of actual participation in the Hadza way of life, even temporarily, offers a more even and respectful engagement, and thereby a closer human connection, than would a more superficial and touristic safari approach. Few artists of cross-cultural sampling can claim such a traveller’s authenticity. Jeanneau’s interviewer for *Pop Matters*, the researcher and sound artist William Gibson, concludes the piece by emphasising that because large numbers of visitors would accelerate the ongoing erosion of ethnic groups in the region, it is desirable that only few westerners visit Zomia (Gibson, 2018). With this deployment of cultural exploitation, Gibson has in mind only the presumed interests of such groups, not authenticity or musical concerns in general. Yet to accept both Jeanneau’s authenticity and Gibson’s protective impulse leads towards a discourse of exclusivity and the conditions of entitlement to record, remix and represent ethnic minorities; neither should all artists sample freely and arbitrarily those with whom they have no personal connection nor should they all trek to remote communities, bringing globalist tendencies with them, for the quantitative completion of a prerequisite. The touch of the visitor, whether made in person or over cultural and spatiotemporal distances, changes irrevocably that which it observes; it must therefore be made with care and responsibility. Perhaps, Gibson implies, it should not be made at all. Such a methodological imperative appears pertinent in all but the most strictly non-referential uses of sampling.

As already noted, Jeanneau acknowledges his field recordings as definitive and his electro-acoustic reworks as derivative. This communicates a respectful deference both to the performers themselves and to their communities generally; moreover, it lowers the threat of his reworks to the integrity of those they display.

The final narrative dimension is Jeanneau's outspoken distaste for commercialism, which manifests artistically in subversions of stereotypes. This position distances both his field recordings and outlet of reworks from the creative influences of commercialism, associating them instead with methodological sincerity and artistic integrity. More generally, Jeanneau targets commercialism rather as a global than as a western problem; the work *Dian Long* (Jeanneau, 2018) comprises two separate approaches to challenging "the cruel tendency of modern China to reject tradition and embrace full on bling bling [*sic*] culture" (Jeanneau, Discrepant | Kink Gong – Dian Long: Soundscape China / Destruction of Chinese Pop, n.d.). Jeanneau's impulse to track down ethnic minority music seems initially to have stemmed from a search "for music with special emotions, far away from fashion, Western harmony and so on" (Gibson, 2018). The ongoing threat to many rural communities in Zomia and elsewhere by global structures of commercial modernisation is unlikely to soften this anti-commercial stance. In the context of exotic sampling, Jeanneau uses these sympathies to distinguish his own material from "really scary fake jungle, savage, ritual bullshit exotica" in which the fetish of primitivistic essentialism serves the fulfilment of western "sex and drug culture" (Gibson, 2018).

Jeanneau sees his own remixed recordings, including *Tanzania*, as anti-commercial at least to the extent that they neither pander stylistically to the typical expectations of the world music designation nor reduce samples to demeaning, functional signification. *Tanzania* embraces the mediating perspective of artistic cultural representation, which is to say that it claims to represent Hadza themselves substantially less than it does Jeanneau's own disposition towards them. Thereby, *Tanzania* and similar Kink Gong releases resemble outlets for reproducing memorable personal experiences. Jeanneau remarks of this notion that "I cannot see it only as a musicologist" and that instead, "for me it's all part of a story, the time I spent with those people" (Gibson, 2018). Unlike his notes for *Music of Tanzania*, which contextualise every present field recording, Jeanneau's writing in the press release for *Tanzania* is anecdotal. He describes his excursion, in which he and Stephenson joyfully lost track of time, as an "intense trip away from all the [year 2000] millennium bullshit celebrations" (Jeanneau, Discrepant - Kink Gong - Tanzania LP, n.d.). He uses a story of one Hadza's supposing the

year to be 1975 to symbolise both his own weariness of excessive cultural familiarity – and technological hegemony – and his taking a corresponding delight in the company of a community with no use for chronometric timekeeping.

*Visual narrative.* The cover photograph of *Tanzania* contains certainly its most striking and nuanced messages. The closeness of the head-shot and the direct, upward gaze of the child inevitably denote a face-to-face encounter between adult and child; from a moment frozen temporally by a camera, the appearance and connotations of the child, as a perhaps unwitting representative of Hadza in general, remain perpetually available for countless interchangeable encounters. Combined with a shallow depth of field, this closeness directs attention to the eyes, nose and cheeks, where the viewer will likely examine the texture of the skin and note customary facial markings. There is enough detail in the eyes that Stephenson himself is clearly visible not only as a looming silhouette reflected in each but also as a shadow cast over much of the child's face. Moreover, in spite of its archival consistency with the layout of previous Kink Gong releases, the placement of text on the image appears as western script imprinted directly upon the body of a child of a minority culture. The gravely ambiguous expression of the child made unflinching by the temporal capture of photography, the face-to-face portrait made intimate by a close crop, the looming shadow of Stephenson, an adult foreigner, a documenting westerner, and the artist name and title placed almost as if applied directly to the child's skin, combine to form a powerfully troubling visual composition. Although so much of the music of *Tanzania* seeks comfort and warmth, in the sense of optimistic sameness, the cover photograph seems rather to connote the threats of western imperialism, Orientalism and even tourism – rendered as shadows looming over a vulnerable, if stern and unflinching, culture. As well as being an obvious reference to a critical discourse, the photograph positions Stephenson, and Jeanneau by extension, as active participants within the discourse. It interrupts the possibility that they were with Hadza simply and unproblematically as equals. In this way, it displays some of the self-awareness that Jeanneau has claimed.

#### **4.1.5 Habitus and commodification**

*Conditions of production.* By unspecified means, Jeanneau sampled the reference material with new edited sections between 2000 and 2010.



*Market orientation: reception platforms and reification.* Despite anti-commercialist narratives, both Jeanneau's library of ethnographic material and his artistic material as the entity Kink Gong – particularly those of his works released by independent labels – consist of organised commercial products currently in marketplace circulation. Thereby, they pursue (perhaps however grudgingly) the operation of balancing the respectful signification of reference material with the attraction of commercial interest.

With the catalogue number CREP 17, *Tanzania* was officially released by Discrepant both as a vinyl record and as digital audio files on 8 June 2015 (Jeanneau, Discrepant - Kink Gong - Tanzania LP, n.d.). The vinyl version consists of a single record housed within unmarked inner sleeves and a printed outer sleeve bearing images and text. A printed label marks each side of the record itself. This edition consists of 500 manufactured copies. When initially distributed, the album was available from a range of independent and non-independent vinyl record suppliers, such as Norman Records and Boomkat in the UK, as well as directly from the label via both its homepage and its Bandcamp site. As of 22 May 2019, the record is virtually out of stock and is not due for reissue; a handful of copies remain available for sale directly from the label.

The digital version of *Tanzania* comprises discrete encoded audio files and a digitally encoded cover image matching that of the vinyl sleeve front cover. Such standard metadata tags as artist name, album title, individual track title and track number organise the files, matching by default the playing order of the vinyl record. The digital version is available not only on the Bandcamp sites of Kink Gong and Discrepant, where a customer may choose the specific file format of the audio and pay any amount over a minimum price of £7 (Discrepant, Music | Discrepant, n.d.), but also within a wide range of digital music vendors. For instance, while Spotify offers the album for streaming, Amazon offers it both on streaming (via its Amazon Music Unlimited streaming service) and MP3 download formats.

Like most other independent music releases, *Tanzania* largely conforms to the dominant structure of a pop album. Like most pop albums, its composition and performance are attributed, despite the cast of individuals populating its reference material, to a single artistic entity. The pop album format tends to present discrete pieces more as a single thematic unit than as a collection of mutually unrelated works. The duration of the album, a little short of forty minutes, meets an average commercial LP standard. The distribution of this duration across each track ensures that the album can be divided roughly equally down the middle,

facilitating economically a two-sided record pressing.<sup>13</sup> Another fundamental similarity to pop music is the studio – even if substituted mainly by a computer in this case – as a vital technology of composition, arrangement, colouring and overall incremental development.

Whether physically imprinted or digitally encoded, a music product rarely arrives at market outlets unaccompanied by a press release. This is copy text – usually anonymous, in a semi-formal and authoritative register and seldom exceeding a few hundred words – with the ostensible purpose of distinguishing a music product by specifying and contextualising its artistic credentials. Unusually, the press release for *Tanzania* consists mostly of a quoted statement from Jeanneau. The rest of the text is so restrained as to describe the album only as “another unique document of Kink Gong’s electronic deconstructions” and “some of his first re-interpretations and field recordings made in the late 90’s [*sic*] in Tanzania, Africa” (Jeanneau, *Discrepant - Kink Gong - Tanzania LP*, n.d.). Evidently reluctant to mediate and restate excessively the relationship between Jeanneau and the music, *Discrepant* trusts him to make *Tanzania* and those it depicts sufficiently comprehensible and interesting to potential customers. The seeming authenticity of this commitment extends to the punkish artistic licence of reproducing errors in Jeanneau’s grammar and typing.

On the Bandcamp profile of *Discrepant*, certain keywords are tagged to most releases in its catalogue: “avant-garde”, “electronic”, “experimental”, “global”, “soundscape” and “exotica” (*Discrepant, Music | Discrepant*, n.d.). Such tags situate the material within a landscape of crude references including genres and subgenres as well as untethered key words and associations. This allows categorical navigation within a marketplace environment, making releases appear when users browse the vast collections of the website with narrowed search criteria; sifting through the archive for global or exotic material. Here, *Discrepant* harnesses these selected terms, embracing and affirming their complex connotations as part of its self-image. They play a basic role in organising not only some of the initial market valuation of the music but its availability, in search results, to anticipated audiences. In so organising itself, *Discrepant* contributes to a new media canon of global, experimental and exotic musics, in order both to distribute obscure materials and sustain itself financially from their cultural value.

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<sup>13</sup> Naturally, an album purely intended for CD or other digital formats might well ignore equal divisions.

*Location.* In 1992 Jeanneau moved to China, which apparently remained the geographical nexus for his roving lifestyle until 2014. At this point he relocated to Berlin, Germany both on financial grounds and “to solve the problem of [my son’s] education” (Rusu, 2018).

*Status.* Jeanneau appears to be a white male. Despite a long period of residence in China and South East Asia, during which he became a fluent speaker of Chinese<sup>14</sup> and Khmer (Ives, 2011), he does not consider himself multicultural and rejects the possibility of his ever understanding or identifying with Chinese culture; his son, on the other hand, “truly understands the two cultures, the two societies” (Rusu, 2018). No present research material states either Jeanneau’s educational or his economic background. As already noted, he was raised in Paris, France.

#### 4.1.6 Legal and ethical matters

*Tanzania* entails no obvious legal problems regarding the sampling of reference material. Jeanneau personally recorded the audio, making him responsible by default under Anglo-European and most other legal systems for granting its usage rights. Without correspondence, it can at best be only presumed that Hadza were tolerant of Jeanneau’s documenting. Although the conditions of any negotiation or remuneration are unknown, Jeanneau has stated that he repays musicians at the time as far as means allow, including by giving musicians CD copies of the ensuing recordings (that is, the originals, rather than the remixes) to share with their families (Rusu, 2018). This suggests that, as he deals personally with those he records, Jeanneau has faced the extraordinary opportunity to discuss his artistic practice with them. Although digital and vinyl sales figures elude this study, it is a safe assumption that *Tanzania* was and remains no lucrative commercial music release.

Naturally, none of the musical performances represented in the reference material comprises copyrighted composition. Such music as that of the *epeme* ceremony lacks both written score and formal musical status in general, as western musical aesthetics would consider it. As an integrated component of transient, often animist social processes – at the risk of wording it as those who perform the music never would – the music itself has no legal status in the music industry. As for visual dimensions, that Stephenson blessed the use of his photography for both *Tanzania* and *Music of Tanzania* with his full permission is beyond doubt.

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<sup>14</sup> In the cited article, the language variety of Chinese spoken by Jeanneau goes unspecified.

## 4.2 Conclusions

### 4.2.1 RQ1

*What creative uses of sampling occur in the case study? What meanings do these uses of samples produce? How is sampling practice best understood to accommodate these meanings?* As displayed in Figure 2 (section 4.1.1), I grouped creative sampling throughout *Tanzania* into the three categories of identifiable material, sampler, and non-referential texture. ‘Identifiable material’ refers to sampled material that remains recognisable after creative application and recontextualisation. The various samples in this category display a range of meanings. For instance, some identifiable – if unspecified – extra-musical material appears to express what Jeanneau calls proximity. I have understood this to mean the fetish-properties of intimacy, common-sense realism and authenticity. However, the most distinctive and significant use of identifiable material throughout *Tanzania* is that of human voices, which in contrast to other selected material go relatively untransformed. I suggested that this methodological practice, aside from satisfying aesthetic or stylistic preferences, gestures towards an ethical index for the limits on sampling practice. Hadza are thus represented by their recorded voices, but only indirectly. Because the realism of this representation is directly affected by the contrast between the album’s various sampling techniques, and because this contrast is of narrative importance to the album, an instance understanding of sampling is here inadequate. Instead, I suggest a combination of both representational and non-representational understandings of sampling.

‘Sampler’ refers to material used as a voice for tonally quantised instrumentation. In *Tanzania*, the sampler allows Jeanneau harmonically to accompany musical phrases sung by Hadza. On certain tracks, especially ‘Motomoto (fire)’ and ‘Epeme (moonless night ceremony)’, the primary function of the sampler is to simulate collaboration (and thereby mutual respect) between Jeanneau and the Hadza he samples. Furthermore, this simulation offers an important, if abstract, reference for discourses in which Jeanneau participates, chiefly that of the ethical encounter between westerner-recordist and ethnic minority. For example, the simulation obscures the authorial agency of the album’s assembly (which is Jeanneau’s alone) by seeming to offer space for the voices of Hadza and relegating Jeanneau’s active musical role to collaborative instrumental accompaniment and support, rather than to leadership. These meanings relate only indirectly to the sound used by the sampler instrument, which remains (by at least me) unidentified. The sampler here is non-referential, the plasticity of the sound instead underscoring Jeanneau’s disposition.

‘Non-referential texture’ technically describes material so electro-acoustically transformed that the original sounds of the reference material are difficult or impossible to identify. Such material functionally contributes towards the aesthetic texture of the unreal soundscape with incomplete or without reference to any original sound. Some of this material does appear to function as an augmentation of material intended by Jeanneau to express proximity, as with identifiable material. When this occurs, the specific origin of the sound may prove inconsequential while the categorisation of the sound as peripheral remains referentially important.

Altogether, Jeanneau manipulates recorded material to create reconstructions of the events he has recorded. The obvious unreality of these events depends not upon the style or fine details of any electro-acoustic activity, for all recorded music emerges as the result of such activity (in other words, the unreality of *Tanzania* is a formal consequence). What characterises the album in a more narratively important way is its post-modern and self-conscious orientation as an explicit fantasy. RQ2 (section 4.2.2) summarises this and other narrative dimensions in further detail.

#### **4.2.2 RQ2**

*How does the case study engage narratively with issues of power, agency, and the identification and display of cultures?* As expected, I found that the discursive contributions evident in and around *Tanzania* operate multi-modally across networks of such musical, extra-musical and non-musical venues as other musical releases, press copy and interviews with the artist. Interpretation and appreciation of the musical material of *Tanzania* benefit from acknowledging and considering these networks.

At some stages, I preferred to consider the album’s resemblances to post-modern ethnography. Although this allowed for generous interpretation of its electro-acoustic organisation, the discursive standard of cultural display to which it held the album (without evidence of its being intended as any manifestation of any post-modern ethnographic ideal) showed the association to be misplaced. *Tanzania* does concentrate on the evocation of a fantastical, participatory intercultural encounter; it cultivates the impression of fragmentary collaboration and textual polyvocality, resisting the overt representation of Hadza as such, and avoiding descriptive textuality. However, the album struggles to overcome its imbuing a fetishised cultural other with an illusory agency, a process that masks Jeanneau’s prescriptive authorship. These are the dictatorial power dynamics of the lone writer, artist, voice, sampling

practitioner. The textualisation of *Tanzania* is ultimately as good as non-participatory. It considers an evocative, pluralistic fantasy rather than evoking one. I believe that the album subverts perfunctory, commodified ethnographic description more effectively by excluding ethnography than by contemplating an alternative form of ethnography.

Although the fantastical, structurally loose and mainly undescriptive content of *Tanzania* somewhat recalls fourth world undifferentiation (signification), the combined uses of sampling as well as explicit textual and historical references to Jeanneau's experiences with Hadza people resist the decidedly vague, exotic utopianism of that style. The unaltered clarity of some present samples, as well as the listener tendency to discriminate original context in recorded sounds, emphasise the historicity of the recordings. At the same time, the album barely commits to description (Orientalism, colonialism). At its worst, *Tanzania* seems to essentialise Hadza as instruments for Jeanneau's experience, implying a western fever dream of primitive escape. In the album's press release, Jeanneau audaciously associates this experience with alienation from undesirable aspects of western culture, even as messages elsewhere embody the usual tension of exotic experimentation by implying a corresponding derision of colonialist desire. This is a tension that Corbett found troublesome in other artists (see section 2.3.3), and he would be unlikely to excuse it in this case. Although this is perhaps the album's most fundamentally problematic aspect, it is a critical process of referential action and thus a banal observation without evidence of misguided, insensitive, violent or otherwise harmful display. Although its success is incomplete, the album clearly hardly intends or especially benefits from any display of the sort, other than in its potential marketability as mere exotica. I find that what it seems desperate to display are unreal Hadza; it virtually refuses to present itself as an authority on any notion of real Hadza, instead leaving that responsibility to *Music of Tanzania*. Yet, as observed, its commitment to this vital distinction is somewhat lethargic.

Thus, the fantastical soundscapes of *Tanzania* bracket the problems of essentialism, probably all too aware of them, and decline to engage too openly with them, as if – considering the poignant cover photograph – convinced of their inevitability. The wider critical narrative implies that, under proper (respectful, considerate, humble, authentic) conditions, the harms of essentialism (negation, exploitation, contempt, violence) or even of common-sense misappropriation can possibly be minimised. To this end, Jeanneau's relatively humble lifestyle and methods as a recordist, traveller and artist, his taste for non-commercial sonic experimentation, and his more informative (if too more typically ethnographic) attempts at documentation in *Music of Tanzania*, together contribute to an optimistic narrative of

minimising epistemic harm exacted upon Hadza by his sampling and reconstructing them through his own system of controlled, fictional references. *Tanzania* appears thereby as an attempt to subvert shallow tropes and the excessive commercialism of world music. It captures self-indulgent, reconstructive storytelling (without much of a story) and transcultural musical fantasy. It also appears as the outcome of a commendable political project not only of considering but also of realising through action (lifestyle and personal affiliation represented through artistic and narrative practice) virtues conducive to an acceptable cultural relationship, which is to say an acceptable procedure of transcultural appropriation art in the form of sample-based music circulating an independent marketplace. Kim and Veal suppose of Sublime Frequencies that “[w]hile ripe for criticism on Orientalist grounds, [its] approach can sometimes foster a type of cross-cultural understanding, in its own, idiosyncratic way” (2017, p. 19). This at least is one definite (if vague) summary applicable also to Kink Gong. At perhaps its best, *Tanzania* gestures by way of its extraordinary sonics towards a transcendent cultural experience towards a self-reflective methodology for sampling practice.

#### **4.2.3 Further remarks**

I would suggest that the discussions given above have generally fulfilled the research aims RA1 and RA2. Regarding RA3, I would offer that artists practising sampling carefully consider less the allocation of property and ownership than the cultural agency of reference material. They might consider this before, during and after the conclusion of the sampling act, across pertinent contextualities and various understandings of sampling. They might consider degrees of separation between themselves and their reference material. Moreover, they might consider how far their own sense of cultural identity – even one of networked action – entitles them to reproduce, at least without sensitive and unexploitative adaptation, material apparently given meaning by and for other identities. Finally, they should anticipate that their uses of sampling may later prove problematic in unforeseen ways. Although such vague suggestions present no barrier to Orientalism in sampling practice, they may improve the embodied practice and ethical sensibilities of those creatively immersed in the sampling continuum.

At the beginning of the present paper, I noted that digital sampling practice as a cultural phenomenon is a complicated subject, accessible from discourses as diverse as technology, representation, communication, copyright law, commodification, authenticity, ethics and aesthetics. I noted further that adding post-colonial and transcultural threads to the subject of

sampling practice would bring in the need to discuss power dynamics and inter-cultural politics. Despite a promise to maintain some level of focus (by concentrating on multi-modal narrative communication in *Tanzania* and its engagement with post-colonial critiques of the appropriation and display of cultural identities), I acknowledge at this end stage that the scope of the study proved too wide and, unfortunately, too shallow in areas. It has been helpful, interesting and arguably necessary for research personally to relate *Tanzania* to so many topics. Yet as a single research project, I am certain that this study would have benefitted from a far narrower focus and accordingly a finer understanding of key concepts. Such is my recommendation for further study on the subject. For example, one might investigate specifically the conditions of referentiality in contemporary sample practice, the theorisation of agency in samples, or the negotiation of authenticity and highly fetishised commodification in new media. In each of these possible directions, carefully adapted RAK analysis may prove helpful.



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