

## 2. Identity Criticism and Reflexive Globalization

An identity developed from artistic positions, despite all cultural “turns” in research, seems the unquestioned foundation for a variety of texts about new art music. They proceed from the basic assumption that the works of individual composers articulate a “distinctive” and “authentic” position. The principle, which references Enlightenment philosophy, of “speaking with one’s own voice” – understood since the late eighteenth century as the obligation imposed on each of us “to live up to our originality”<sup>15</sup> – is omnipresent in the discourse on contemporary music. It also generally remains the decisive criterion in the education of composers today, which aims for novelty and uniqueness. The crisis of the modern subject asserted by Theodor W. Adorno, Michel Foucault and others,<sup>16</sup> the poststructuralist critique of the authorial principle and monologic authority, and attempts to highlight the “mixed identities” or “semantic chameleon”<sup>17</sup> hidden in musical works of art barely seem to play a part in such a perpetuation of the aesthetics of genius.<sup>18</sup> With a mixture of obstinacy and helplessness, this adherence to composer-centered hermeneutics opposes their obvious marginalization in favor of performers and events that takes place in the commercialized “classical music” scene.

Musicology and music criticism play a key part in this process of ascription. Writing and speaking about music as well as documenting the processes of its creation and performance ultimately cannot avoid providing or “writing over” sound and musical text with identities of the most varied kinds. The increasingly strong orientation toward cultural studies in music research has sensitized us to the subtexts of such music-related identity discourses: the basic idea that composers, performers, and listeners are acting as part of a “cultural practice”<sup>19</sup> implies that their conception of musical sounds and structures is inextricably linked to culturally specific ideas about music. Viewed in a broad historical context, such concepts emerge from a “cultural memory” as described by Aleida and Jan Assmann. The “connective structure” of cultural memory is based on a continued evocation of canonical motifs and ideas within an “extended situation.”<sup>20</sup> It is bound to specific institutions and ritualized forms of public and private presentation and reception as well as the interactions between production, transmission, and reception.<sup>21</sup> Even if many of these processes of cultural practice are disintegrating in the age of digitalization and globalization, we should not underestimate their ongoing presence in cultural discourse and their tendency to reactivate cultural essentialism.

The conception of music as a “cultural practice” has led many authors to reconsider the particular *local* context in which musical concepts, ways of thinking, works, or performances are formulated and realized. Thus Annegret Fauser describes the compositional results of Claude Debussy’s fascination with West Javanese *gamelan saléndro* and the Vietnamese music theater form *hát bội* at the 1889 Paris World’s Fair as “a form of appropriation firmly inscribed in the tradition of French music of the 1890s” while emphasizing that Debussy’s “structural appropriation” eventually paved the way for many similar reinventions of gamelan in twentieth-century

<sup>15</sup> Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 37.

<sup>16</sup> See Wellmer, “Über Musik und Sprache. Variationen und Ergänzungen,” 23–37.

<sup>17</sup> Kramer, “Hercules’ Hautboys,” 149.

<sup>18</sup> An extensive critique of this situation is found in Utz, “Musik von einem fremden Planeten?”

<sup>19</sup> See Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice*, 1800–1900.

<sup>20</sup> Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 2–4, 7–8.

<sup>21</sup> See Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization* and Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*.

music on a global scale.<sup>22</sup> Fauser's study sharpens our understanding of the specific cultural and historical context of Debussy's reception of gamelan, but also makes clear that his particular approach points beyond the framework of a historical contextualization limited by, or to, local or national contexts.

The changing "faces" of Debussy indeed demonstrate very clearly how identities in musical discourse are not simply "given" but continuously reshaped and reinvented. Famously, Debussy idealized "Javanese music" as a refined form of polyphony following "a counterpoint that makes Palestrina's seem like child's play,"<sup>23</sup> a form of music that "contained all the nuances [...] where tonic and dominant became naught but vain ghosts for the use of unruly children."<sup>24</sup> These statements express serious doubts about what many of Debussy's contemporaries perceived as the unchallenged superiority of Western musical culture over non-Western cultures – whereas Debussy's formulations also transferred elements of the exoticist "noble sauvage" topos to the context of modernity.<sup>25</sup> These hints at a culture-critical skepticism did not prevent Debussy from subsequently becoming a key representative of French national music in the run-up to the First World War. Debussy and his increasingly explicit nationalist sentiments played a crucial part in this process, as documented in detail by Barbara L. Kelly.<sup>26</sup> In this way, while the earlier Debussy decided of his own accord to *identify* with a counterculture, partly constituted of the culture-pessimistic discourse that characterized the *ennui* of an entire generation in late nineteenth-century Europe,<sup>27</sup> Debussy later contributed equally explicitly to the reinvention of an affirmative, essentialist French national style in the early twentieth century. One could name many other cases around 1900 that demonstrate a shift from an ambivalent internationalist to an affirmatively nationalist idiom – or vice versa – including those of Bartók, Stravinsky (→ II.3), and Sibelius.

Such examples show clearly that on the one hand, identity is the result of a deliberate, considered, and at times strategic choice between several options, while on the other hand, it is closely tied to complex sociological and political entanglements that may make it seem "inevitable" in many cases. In Debussy's case, such entanglements were his close connection to widespread tendencies of cultural pessimism and orientalism as well as the overall trend of re-ethnicization and a nationalist form of pre- and post-World War I cultural essentialism that ultimately led to the extreme polarizations and ideological conflicts of the 1930s and 40s.

<sup>22</sup> Fauser, *Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World's Fair*, 205.

<sup>23</sup> "Yet Javanese music is based on a type of counterpoint compared to which that of Palestrina is child's play." ("Cependant, la musique javanaise observe un contrepoint auprès duquel celui de Palestrina n'est qu'un jeu d'enfant." Debussy, *Monsieur Croche et autres écrits*, 223. This characterization was published in a retrospective in 1913 in the *Revue S.I.M.*)

<sup>24</sup> Letter to Pierre Louÿs, 22/1/1895, translation quoted after Fauser, *Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World's Fair*, 198.

<sup>25</sup> See Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 228–238.

<sup>26</sup> Kelly, *French Music, Culture, and National Identity, 1870–1939*, 58–76.

<sup>27</sup> See Charle, "Debussy in Fin-de-Siècle Paris."

## Problems of Identity

So, what are the problems with the affirmative concept of identity that is still invoked so often in today's discourse on recent music? In his seminal text "The Question of Cultural Identity," Stuart Hall names five factors that lastingly decentered the image of a stable self-identity in modernity,<sup>28</sup> all based on a close intertwining of subject identity and collective identity:

1. Post-Marxist thinkers have abandoned the idea of an "essence" of the modern subject;
2. Freud's and Lacan's psychoanalysis made it unambiguously clear that identity is not a fixed state, but rather a dynamic and never-ending process;
3. poststructuralist linguistics and philosophy indicated that "structured" identities such as those expressed through language always include uncontrollable supplementary meanings;
4. Michel Foucault described the paradoxical relationship between the isolation of the subject and its collective disciplining in the modern era, with particular reference to the *repressive* character of discourses on identity;
5. theories and social movements of feminism have created a lasting awareness of the gendered layers of the modern subject.

At first glance, the concepts of personal and collective identity, already lastingly destabilized, have been completely abandoned by postcolonial criticism. To state any form of affirmative connection between identity, culture, and ethnicity would raise suspicion of complicity with inherently colonial thought. Viewed against this background, the types of identity offered by strengthened neo-nationalist or pan-national religious, even fundamentalist, "isms" are only seemingly anachronistic: they both react to the same tendencies toward grassroots globalization,<sup>29</sup> in which local and global processes interact and new communities beyond established nations and cultures are formed. The increasing fragmentation of modern societies, termed "super-diversity"<sup>30</sup> by Stephen Vertovec, has in many places sparked the desire for re-territorialization and (re-)ethnicization of identity, extending to a "proliferation and reification of [geographical and mental] boundaries."<sup>31</sup> Today, the traditions that Eric Hobsbawm terms "invented" play a key role in this process, as they have in the construction of national identities for 200 years, as well as in the field of music.<sup>32</sup>

Arif Dirlik shows that it is highly questionable to understand migrants – as paradigmatic as they seem at the present – as the key metaphor of the contemporary world: "The great majority of humankind [continues to] lead settled lives unless pulled or pushed into mobility."<sup>33</sup> Indeed, it is doubtful whether a convincing connection can be made between the social phenomenon of migration and issues of identity in recent arts discourse. Slavoj Žižek incisively shows that the models of the academic or artist, who is always equipped with an appropriate visa, and the migrant, for whom "hybridity" is a traumatic experience, are incompatible (→ I.3).<sup>34</sup> Helmut

<sup>28</sup> Hall, "The Question of Cultural Identity," 285–291.

<sup>29</sup> Appadurai, "Grassroots Globalization."

<sup>30</sup> Vertovec, "Super-Diversity and Its Implications."

<sup>31</sup> Dirlik, "Transnationalism in Theory and Practice."

<sup>32</sup> Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions." For an application of this concept to the music history of China see Lau, "Forever Red."

<sup>33</sup> Dirlik, "Transnationalism in Theory and Practice."

<sup>34</sup> See Žižek, *Ein Plädoyer für die Intoleranz*, 80–81.

Lachenmann has pointed out that the composer – embarking on intercultural encounters with a valid return ticket in their pocket – is unable to understand the kind of “security” that the music of other cultures might constitute in its own local setting (→ I.3; IV.2).<sup>35</sup> In addition, the tendencies of polycultural mixture and hybridity in art and pop culture seem equally toothless: “Obviously, these diverse impulses can be absorbed without remotely threatening the respective societies with descent into an identity crisis. But above all, such a pluralizing and increasingly colorful cultural scene has never threatened, at least not so far, the core of political culture.”<sup>36</sup> So, in new art music too, one can speak of what Dieter Senghaas calls “globalization *deluxe*,”<sup>37</sup> a privileged mode in which the advantages of globalization outshine its problematic side-effects.

Can one, however, conclude from this, as Harry Lehmann suggests, that new music since the postwar period has not known “identity problems” because “otherness” is virtually its basic prerequisite?<sup>38</sup> This would mean overlooking the fact that there is a complex intertwining of music-historical, aesthetic, and compositional discourses that certainly do limit the possibilities to articulate such otherness in specific contexts. One should first of all mention the sustained tendency to suppress the “cultural” element in much new music, which is primarily the legacy of the global political situation after 1945. The institutions for new music in Germany were supported by the allied occupying powers not least with the ulterior motive of installing a supposedly ideology-free area of artistic development as a symbol of political freedom from which no new ideological dangers could result (→ II.5).<sup>39</sup> In fact, in postwar serialism a special compositional logic was developed that sought to remove any “culturally” encoded language from music. Such techniques were guided by the search for an alternative model to the misuse of the language-like communication of messages in totalitarian political systems. The same sociohistorical background can be seen as informing John Cage’s conception of music as “free from likes and dislikes,” which can be understood as the result of a basic skepticism toward the values of European schools of thought among American intellectuals in the aftermath of the Second World War (→ II.6). Admittedly, Igor Stravinsky’s neoclassicism had already been based on a departure from a narrowly defined ethno-national character of the musical language of the Russian nationalist school and his own neo-national works prior to 1917/21. Meanwhile, Béla Bartók adhered to his concept of hybridity of folk and art music, even if its original neo-national components were heavily ruptured by historical events and his overall conception became increasingly universalistically accentuated from the 1930s on (→ II.3).<sup>40</sup> Specifically,

<sup>35</sup> Helmut Lachenmann in conversation with Rolf Elberfeld and Toshio Hosokawa (Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 12/5/2005), quoted in Utz, “Zwischen Mythos und Kooperation,” 28, 31. Probably both Žižek’s and Lachenmann’s arguments can be traced back to Herbert Marcuse’s much-disputed 1965 critique of “repressive tolerance” (see Marcuse, “Repressive Tolerance”).

<sup>36</sup> “[O]ffensichtlich lassen sich diese vielfältigen Impulse absorbieren, ohne daß die betroffenen Gesellschaften auch nur anfänglich in Identitätskrisen zu verfallen drohen. Vor allem: eine sich dergestalt pluralisierende, bunter werdende Kulturszene bedroht nicht, zumindest nicht bis heute, den Kernbestand der politischen Kultur.” (Senghaas, “Moderne und Antimoderne angesichts kultureller Globalisierung,” 329.)

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 328–329.

<sup>38</sup> Lehmann, “Entfremdung – Verfremdung.”

<sup>39</sup> See Beal, “Negotiating Cultural Allies.”

<sup>40</sup> See Brown, “Bartók, the Gypsies, and Hybridity in Music.”

Bartók's approach had a formative effect on decisive developments in art music in Turkey (during the 1920s) and China (during the 1980s).<sup>41</sup>

Of course, the practical implementation of the claim of universalism and self-referentialism in the early 1950s left much to be desired. Even a superficial look at German-French polarities dating back to the beginning of the century shows this clearly: if the Schoenberg-Debussy relationship was "uptight" in every respect due to complications of historical tendencies,<sup>42</sup> it is also scarcely possible to find commonalities between Pierre Boulez's reception of Antonin Artaud in a work such as the Second Piano Sonata (1946–48)<sup>43</sup> and the structuralist mysticism of Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Kreuzspiel* (1951) as supposed "founding moments" of serial thought. And Wolfgang Rihm's neo-expressionist chamber opera *Jakob Lenz* (1977–78), like the neo-organicist sound-time processes in Gérard Grisey's *Les Espaces Acoustiques* (1974–85), can hardly be understood outside of their respective nationally specific traditions of expression, time, language, and sound (though neither work can, of course, be reduced to these traditions). These "cultural" dimensions of modern music in Europe, which are closely connected to their institutional establishment,<sup>44</sup> were barely discussed in European publications until recently. Against such a background, the position that new art music is independent of any "culture," as stated a number of times during the symposium *Musik-Kulturen* at the Darmstadt Summer Course in 2006, is certainly untenable. "Identity problems" indeed hardly seem to exist in many areas of today's composing – but not least because a firm (re)focusing on specific local European forms of thought, language, and sound is taking place. Since the 1980s, this new cultural isolationism can be interpreted not least as echoing the failure of the explicit cultural universalism of the 1960s, which had been articulated in such works as Stockhausen's *Telemusik* (1966) or *Hymnen* (1965–67) (→ II.2).<sup>45</sup> The unhesitating approach to the "resources" of a diffuse "world music" in these works highlights the fact that a critical compositional reflection on cultural difference must first of all overcome the "self-awareness and sense of mission of the (Western) composer."<sup>46</sup> Until now, however, few have been prepared to take this step with its full implications.

## Reflexive Globalization

Pointing out the diversification of contemporary music has become commonplace in music journalism. There is now an increasing awareness that general patterns of cultural globalization can be identified equally in the social, political, and structural dimensions of an art music whose production and reception take place almost everywhere in the world today. One of these patterns lies in the interdependence of cultural homogenization and cultural particularization:<sup>47</sup> on the one hand, cultural norms and idioms are subject to a process of standardization – largely synonymous with Westernization – expressed in striking buzzwords of globalization

<sup>41</sup> See Gertich and Greve, "Neue Musik im postkolonialen Zeitalter," 52–55, Kouwenhoven, "Mainland China's New Music (III)," 85–86, and Wong, "Bartók's Influence on Chinese New Music in the Post-Cultural Revolution Era."

<sup>42</sup> See Haselböck, "Debussy und die Wiener Schule."

<sup>43</sup> See Zenck, "Artaud – Boulez – Rihm."

<sup>44</sup> See Born, *Rationalizing Culture*.

<sup>45</sup> See Utz, *Neue Musik und Interkulturalität*, 136–171.

<sup>46</sup> Wilson, "Die Ahnen des Kolumbus," 18 ("Selbst- und Sendungsbewusstsein[s] des [westlichen] Komponisten.")

<sup>47</sup> See Hall, "The Question of Cultural Identity," 273–316.

theory such as “McDonaldization”<sup>48</sup> or “Coca-Colonization.”<sup>49</sup> In the realm of contemporary art music, this trend is closely linked to an enduring monopoly on professional music education exerted by Western musical institutions as well as the problems posed by the institutionalization of an independent art in non-Western societies. One can observe a leveling-out process: it is often hard or impossible to determine whether a new work has been created by a composer from Cologne, Paris, Milan, Beijing, San Francisco, or Johannesburg. At this point, no concept initially seems more questionable in the music of today than that of a specific local or regional identity, let alone “ethnicity.” This skepticism toward the “idiomatic” must undoubtedly be viewed as the legacy of the aforementioned radical critique of music’s likeness to language after 1945.

This situation, however, triggers an understandable compensatory backlash: a search for lasting and emphatic forms of cultural difference that cannot be leveled out by this process of standardization (→ III.4). At the same time, however, it is important to realize that simply opposing homogenizing Westernization and a naive “back to the origins” movement cannot do justice to the complexity of the situation. Several studies of non-Western contemporary music have emphasized that music which defies the stereotypical patterns of local identity can be seen in the social contexts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America as a resistance against those ubiquitous styles that flatten traditional practices for commercial or political purposes.<sup>50</sup> Such ways of accentuating cultural difference in the new art musics of Africa, Asia, and South America are suggestive for an intercultural music history (→ II.1), but also demand a more precise definition of what cultural difference, alterity, or incommensurability can mean (→ I.3, II.4).

This seems all the more urgent because ethnomusicology has abandoned its formerly strict concept of authenticity. Now ethnomusicologists often sympathize with forms of popular music that adopt elements from traditional musical practice. Standardizing tendencies inherent in such forms of pop music (defined as “ethnic”) are rarely criticized. This is despite their homogenized phrases and regular beats often eliminating precisely the subtle melodic or rhythmic blurring that forms one of the “irritating” layers of cultural difference, and is therefore unsuited to representative or economic purposes.<sup>51</sup> Overall, forms of standardizing mediation have particularly far-reaching effects in the age of digitalization, including in non-Western practices. Thus, the media-assisted production and dissemination of certain traditional genres can result in a loss of religious or ritual functions, as shown by Gerd Grupe in the case of *qawwali* music in India and Pakistan. In addition, one can observe a transregional standardization in certain styles of performance that leads to a loss of diversity in regional practices, for example in the *karawitan* compositions of Javanese gamelan music.<sup>52</sup>

Taking all this into account, then, one should begin by noting that with regard to the dynamics of globalization, global standardization processes and local identity conflicts interact in manifold ways – as Roland Robertson already tried to express in 1995 with the term “glocalization.”<sup>53</sup> Applied to musical discourses, these dynamics mean first of all that very specific local practices (that cannot be learned or understood without personal, long-term contact) mingle

48 Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society*.

49 Kooijman, “Fabricating the Absolute Fake,” 34–35, Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonisation und Kalter Krieg*.

50 See Scherzinger, “Art Music in a Cross-Cultural Context,” 610–611.

51 See the discussion in Dorschel, “Interkulturelle Begegnung als existentielles Risiko,” 104–108.

52 Grupe, “Wachswalzen und CDs,” 206.

53 Robertson, “Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity.”

in various ways with the appropriation of “international” practices. This inevitably leads to a process of fragmentation and progressive differentiation.

Naturally, such fragmentation is already implicit in the European concept of modernity, which initiated an increasingly critical form of self-reflection expressed in the concept of a “Second Modernity” or “reflexive modernity.” These terms emphasize the irreversibility of globalization processes and urgently thematize the resulting social and societal problems such as mass unemployment, environmental damage, and so forth.<sup>54</sup> Following on from this at the end of the 1990s, Ulrich Beck described the concept of “reflexive globalization” as a situation in which the current problematic, conflict-laden (environmental or social – but also cultural) effects of globalization can be “reflected upon” and incorporated into new cultural practices.<sup>55</sup> He thus rejected, as in the previously mentioned theories of Appadurai, Vertovec, and Dirlik, the basic model of “container theory,” in which a dynamic acting from “outside” a clearly delineated territory influences it locally. Instead, reflexive globalization also refers to the formation of new groupings and communities across established (national, cultural, political, or religious) identity boundaries.

Since at least the early twentieth century, such reflexivity has been absolutely essential for understanding musical cultures outside Europe. They have evolved in close, reflexive, and often fractious interaction with European modernity. Thus, during the notorious symposium “Overcoming Modernity” (*Kindai no chōkoku*) in July 1942 in Kyoto, the Japanese composer Saburō Moroi (1903–1977)<sup>56</sup> stated that only music that expressed Japanese “spirit” using the means of Western compositional techniques and instrumentation was capable of “overcoming modernity.”<sup>57</sup> This was the slogan of the symposium for the construction of an alternative Japanese modernity that was not meant to be synonymous with “Westernization.” Its jingoistic undertones in the context of Japanese military aggression led to sustained criticism of the symposium in postwar Japan.<sup>58</sup> While those that repeatedly praise the title and content of this symposium have mostly been nationalist Japanese authors,<sup>59</sup> the realization has spread in the last two decades that a discussion of modernity will remain inadequate without an acceptance of several different, competing “modernities”<sup>60</sup> (→ II.1).

Moroi’s distinction between spirit and technique was a master pattern for the adoption of Western culture in Japan and China as early as the mid-nineteenth century (→ III.1). It has been incorporated, in a milder form, as part of the cultural essentialism in the aesthetics of many composers in Asia since the 1930s. In the 1960s, Isang Yun, José Maceda, Chou Wen-Chung, and Tōru Takemitsu established – each with their own points of emphasis – a discourse on the “characteristics” of Asian music that specifically aimed to “overcome” the dominance of Western aesthetics (→ III.4). Such aesthetics had become particularly questionable, not least because of the Second World War. But these composers also sought to integrate key elements

54 Beck, “Das Zeitalter der Nebenfolgen und die Politisierung der Moderne.”

55 Beck and Zolo, “What Is Globalization?”, see also Beck, *Die Erfindung des Politischen*.

56 On Moroi see Galliano, *Yōgaku*, 73–76, 88.

57 See Minamoto, “The Symposium on ‘Overcoming Modernity.’”

58 This criticism also concerned the philosophers of the Kyoto school participating in the symposium, namely Keiji Nishitani and Shigetaka Suzuki, see *ibid.*

59 See Hijiya-Kirschner, “Leuchtet Japan?”

60 See Eisenstadt, *Multiple Modernities* and Elberfeld, “Moderne interkulturell.”

of Western thought.<sup>61</sup> Yun and Chou, as migrant composers, faced the challenge of leading this discourse in direct confrontation with Western aesthetic trends.

While their writings and statements showed clear tendencies toward essentialism,<sup>62</sup> their works, by contrast, often dealt with very specific traditions. Chou's works *The Willows are New* (1957) and *Yü Ko* (1965), for example, attempt – with somewhat limited success – to apply performance principles of the ancient Chinese zither *qin* to Western instruments.<sup>63</sup> Yun's *Réak* (1966) transfers the continuous pitch inflections and interwoven lines of Korean court music into sound textures of the Western orchestra.<sup>64</sup> If such concepts often emphasize *alterity* in relation to Western musical aesthetic discourse, it should not be forgotten how strongly they were also influenced by Arnold Schoenberg's, Edgard Varèse's, Iannis Xenakis's, and Karlheinz Stockhausen's critiques of tradition and identity in Western modernity.

The brief outline I have thus far presented already suggests that jettisoning the concept of identity entirely on account of the crisis of identity is far too crudely reductive. It has been asserted on various occasions that the music of non-Western contemporary composers ought not only to be discussed against the backdrop of debates of cultural identity, but rather primarily understood and respected as a manifestation of "individual" artistic positions:

New Chinese Music ought to be considered on an international stage, not as a music both exotic and Other, but as a music in its own right, [...] as a music of international import, by individuals, independent of their national descent. [...] the Chineseness of Chinese music need not be considered a matter of course but of individual choice and development. Each of these composers writes his or her own personal music, creating something beyond the traditions (Chinese or otherwise) that are being used.<sup>65</sup>

What is required is to illuminate these international, simply musical aspects rather than persisting in the search – naturally an important one, but no longer indispensable – for Chinese or Asian identity, self-assertion or national style in this music, which, to put it in extreme terms, amounts more to a discrimination against Asian composers and their music. [...] the Asian composer must be able and allowed to define themselves not as an *Asian* composer, but as an *Asian composer*.<sup>66</sup>

In fact, this has long been a reality in the music scene. Younger composers such as Unsuk Chin, Dai Fujikura, or Ying Wang pursue exceptionally successful careers, mainly in Western cultural centers. Their international, virtuosic idiom is a guarantee of success, and it seems that if they were to address themes of intercultural rupture and hybridity more explicitly, this success would be hindered rather than assisted. But is it really possible for "cultural" discourse – re-

61 See Utz, *Neue Musik und Interkulturalität*, 222–311.

62 See for example Chou, "Asian Esthetics and World Music" and Yun, "Über meine Musik."

63 See Utz, *Neue Musik und Interkulturalität*, 270–277.

64 See Choi, "Réak (1966)."

65 Mittler, "Against National Style."

66 Mittler, "Wider den 'nationalen Stil,'" 607. ("Diese internationalen, einfach musikalischen Aspekte gilt es zu beleuchten, nicht mehr zu verharren in der [natürlich wichtigen, aber nicht mehr unerlässlichen] Suche nach chinesischer oder asiatischer Identität, nach Selbstbehauptung, nach nationalem Stil in dieser Musik, die, um es extrem auszudrücken, eher einer Diskriminierung asiatischer Komponisten und ihrer Musik gleichkommt. [...] Der asiatische Komponist muss sich neu definieren können und dürfen, nicht als *asiatischer* Komponist, sondern als *asiatischer Komponist*.)

gardless of a composer's origin and tradition – to be simply ignored in favor of an “individual” perspective? Is it not necessary, rather, to place renewed emphasis on the sociocultural conditions of recent composition and its incorporation into a network of sociocultural transfer of meaning (in the sense of abandoning the music-historical paradigm of “techno-essentialism”)? (→ II.1) In this sense, Samson Young makes it clear that the possibility of “culture-free” listening is limited while “cultural identities” continue to be deliberately evoked by composers and their performers alike through appropriately charged signifiers:

If we embrace the view that ethnic identities are constructs, then to what extent are we interested in how cultural signifiers function to reinforce these imaginary categories? [...] Instead of focusing on the degrees to which a signifier is “traditional” or “contemporary,” could one not ask why ethnicity is performed when it is not always necessary, and potentially even distracts attention from the music itself? In the case of contemporary Chinese music, if sound can indeed be heard free of cultural contexts [...], then why do composers and analysts continue to invoke culture?<sup>68</sup>

Young has also emphasized that it is precisely the demand for a continuous *opposition* to cultural essentialism and a culturalist stereotyping of artistic positions that necessitates thematizing questions of “race, ethnicity, culture and politics” time and again:

I don't think of myself as Chinese in some way, but I probably don't believe in, and certainly do not want to play any part in, reaffirming the notion of a singular, unproblematic “China proper”: the communist China, the China that sits behind firewalls, the China that suppresses freedom of speech and individual liberty. Artists do not operate in vacuums. Works of art circulate, generating real cultural, social and political consequences. It is my belief that an artist as a free agent ought to reflect upon the values she/he abides by in all acts of creativity [...]. The age [of] globalization demands an intensified level of communicative nuance. In times of conflicts, turbulence and confusion, we need to say more, not less, about issues of race, ethnicity, culture and politics.<sup>69</sup>

Frederick Lau ultimately went so far as to say that the protean (and in parts rather successful) adoption of culturalist identity models by Chinese composers of the “new wave” generation in the USA, since the 1980s, can be considered a symptom of identity construction as a career strategy, much like the pop industry’s “superstar syndrome”:

In advocating a style that makes use of Chinese elements, the new wave composers are participating in a codified and globalized market in which they are being perceived through their music and the use of Chinese elements. They are clearly capitalizing on Orientalism as expressed in their music and in their own words in order to transgress the boundaries of Western Orientalist discourse with its emphases on difference, othering, and the exotic. Musical exoticism, according to Jonathan Bellman, suggests the strangeness of a specifically alien culture or ethos. The new wave composers are utilizing such a strategy under the aegis of multiculturalism.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> See Williams, “Of Canons and Context.” See also Cook and Pople, “Introduction: Trajectories of Twentieth-Century Music,” 4.

<sup>68</sup> Young, “Reconsidering Cultural Politics in the Analysis of Contemporary Chinese Music,” 607.

<sup>69</sup> Young, “Reading Contemporary Chinese Music,” 89–90.

<sup>70</sup> Lau, “Fusion or Fission,” citing Bellman, *The Exotic in Western Music*, xii. See also Melvin and Cai, *Rhapsody in Red*, 332–333.

Positively put, when art music's "identity problems" become genuinely perceptible, reflexive globalization becomes truly relevant. Only then can a new framing and definition of perspective regarding established concepts of identity affect both the – admittedly hegemonic – European discourses on aesthetics and the culture-essentialist and neo-nationalist models in and outside of the West. In the process, the resulting musical situations can produce "cluster identities," "patchwork identities," or "multiple identities,"<sup>71</sup> however one chooses to define them in detail. Thus they can ultimately claim contemporary social relevance after all, albeit from a *deluxe* position. Against the backdrop of twentieth-century musical and political history, and the overwhelming economization of present times, this reflexivity appears not merely to be the best of many options, but rather a necessity for advanced art music's survival.

### 3. Discourses of Intercultural Composition

The term "intercultural" is intended here to refer to the interaction of two or more cultural discourses – a form of interaction that must inevitably critically question the lines separating "cultural entities." One way to accentuate the processual aspect of intercultural action is developed in this chapter. Further below, I will apply Jan Assmann's concept of "hypolepsis" – understood as the transformative continuation of texts within the configuration of (inter)cultural memories – to musical contexts.

In analyzing musical *interculturality*, it would seem that we are obliged to problematize fundamental preconditions of the European concept of art if we are to avoid the frequent accusation of merely integrating elements from non-Western cultures into a "Eurological"<sup>72</sup> discourse. That integration inevitably places the Other in an asymmetrical power structure, appropriates it in a postcolonial fashion, and thus distorts it without giving its elements a chance to articulate their cultural difference. However accurate this critique may be in the cases of some allegedly intercultural, but in fact monocultural, compositional approaches, its problem lies in its culture-essentialist precondition, which remains trapped in the very dualism of "self" and "other," of "cultural self" and "cultural other," that it purports to reject. Wolfgang Welsch addresses this with his concept of "transculturality," and accuses theories of multiculturality and interculturality of clinging to the traditional concept of culture attributed to Johann Gottfried Herder's "sphere premise."<sup>73</sup> This means that they propagate (at least implicitly) a homogeneous concept of culture and thus lay the foundation for culture-based separation and isolation, extending to "cultural racism,"<sup>74</sup> whereas *multiculturality* retains a basic polarity in the model of coexistence of cultural entities, Welsch argues, and produces "parallel cultures." The basic model of dialogue presupposed in *interculturality* does not solve the basic problem, since its insistence on the singularity of cultures involves the exclusion of others. Rather, Welsch highlights the hybrid, permeable, and transformative constitution of all present cultures and emphasizes, in the context of globalization, the *internal* transculturality of individuals, which is clear in the fact that "we all possess 'multiple attachments and identities'."<sup>75</sup> This is taken a step further by Byung-Chul Han

<sup>71</sup> See Elberfeld, "Das Ich ist kein Ding, sondern ein Ort."

<sup>72</sup> Lewis, "Improvised Music after 1950." See Bhagwati, "Imagining the Other's Voice."

<sup>73</sup> See Löchte, *Johann Gottfried Herder: Kulturtheorie und Humanitätsidee*, 128–139, Zimmermann, "Globale Entwürfe," 227–231, and Welsch, "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today."

<sup>74</sup> Welsch, "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," 195.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 198.