

Popular Music and Gender in a Transcultural Context

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Transculturality:

- Ties to cosmopolitanism and globalisation
- A postmodern mode of perceiving globality – interdisciplinary and poststructural
- Differs from multiculturalism (co-existence without necessarily mixing with neighbouring cultures) and interculturalism (cultures on an equal footing with each other) in that cultural traits are disseminated and become hegemonic
- Language is an exemplary signifier of transculturality. In a context of popular music, English shifts from a transparent tool to an opaque signifier of cultural capital.

Transcultural approach:

Advantages:

- Humanist
- Postmodern/poststructural; a dynamic rather than static worldview
- Interdisciplinary
- Cosmopolitan

Pitfalls:

- Utopian
- Difference-based
- Anglocentric
- Obscures how ideas of normality are constructed and maintained

«There is no authorial voice. There are only multiple readings.»

(David Bowie)



... So what's gender got to do with it?

Teresa de Lauretis: *Technologies of Gender* (1987)

- 1. Gender is (a) representation – which is not to say that it does not have concrete or real implications, both social and subjective, for the material life of individuals. On the contrary,
- 2. [the] representation of gender *is* its construction – and in the simplest sense it can be said that all of Western art and high culture is the engraving of the history of that construction.
- 3. The construction of gender goes on as busily today as it did in earlier times, say, the Victorian era. [...] The construction of gender also goes on, if less obviously, in the academy ... and indeed especially in feminism.
- 4. Paradoxically, therefore, the construction of gender is also effected by its deconstruction; that is to say, by any discourse, feminist or otherwise, that would discard it as ideological misrepresentation. (p. 3)

Susan McClary: *Feminine Endings* (1991)

- [Music] does not just passively reflect society; it also serves as a public forum within which various models of gender organization (along with many other aspects of social life) are asserted, adopted, contested, and negotiated. (p. 8)
- These codes change over time – the ‘meaning’ of femininity was not the same in the eighteenth century as in the late nineteenth, and musical characterizations differ accordingly. (Ibid.)

Det meste stemmer i livet til **Marit Larsen** (25) nå: Kjærligheten, musikken – og muffinsene. Bare hun ikke blir for lykkelig.

Redd for å bli for lykkelig



Lady Gaga as Jo Calderone («You and I»)



Del LaGrace Volcano



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