Review of "Music and Youth Culture in Latin America: identity construction Processes from New York to Buenos Aires"

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In this book, Pablo Vila gathers a bunch of interesting and in-depth chapters that discuss the role of music in the configuration of cultural studies beyond the borders of the nation-state. To what extent there is room for nationhood in a globalized world is one of the aspects this book tries to resolve. Musicology posed as a promising discipline in the
study of the connection of music and local cultures, and of course, though numerous works have explored the identity constructions through music, less attention is given to Latin American societies. The main thesis is that music is enrooted in a set of diverse articulations, selected by individuals who opt for the construction of their respective identities. This does not constitute a passive process but a coactive discovery of the self with “Others”. These ongoing negotiations, far from being unilateral, correspond with politics fields. Following this, Vila adds: In this sense, music is a privileged cultural artifact that offers us the real experience of our narratives, imagined identities. Therefore, part of the understanding of our identity (which is always imaginary) would occur when we submit ourselves to the bodily pleasure of the performance or music listening. It is precisely here where the connection between interpellation and desire, between the identitarian offer and the actual identification, occurs (p. 35)

Methodologically speaking, the project shows diverse approaches authored by different scholars, which may be a problem because of dispersions in the arguments, unless by the vast experience of invited fieldworkers and writers who allowed Vila to offer a harmonized product. Ten chapters totaling 289 pages will introduce readers into the sociology of music, its effects in Latin American cultures as well as identity-building processes. The text combines many topics which may be described below:

- Identity and Migration (Chapters one, two and four)
- Music in post-communist Cuba (Chapter four).
- New technology and the use of music (Chapters three, eight)
• Process of Whitening or pro status quo’s glorification (Chapter five)
• Political elaboration of pastime to protect the interest of status quo (Chapters six, seven, eight and ten)
• Music as a commoditization of experience (Chapter nine).

Discussing the problem of identity implies questions of what being Latin American means. From New York to Buenos Aires, Spanish-speakers have imposed a specific imprint on the Latino World, which woke up the dark side of Anglo-ethnocentrism. In this token, Latinos in America are torn between two cultures; they are mediators of two contrasting worlds. Vila and his colleagues understand that deciphering the code of cultural diasporas (by means of music) pivots on the “multi-faceted” interpellations mobile bodies face in their life. Educated and socialized in a hyper-global World, we are complex agents who pro-actively select some cultural aspects of narrative (plots) while others are left behind; and of course, chapters organized in this volume will attempt to respond to this slippery question. Narrative identities allude to a “meaning” which should be rediscovered by the researcher. The encounter of listeners with musical artifacts updates their precedent narrative articulations to the extent that some new performances may very well surface. Given the question of whether conflict still remains in human interactions, music can be commoditized according to a more global international taste where local voices are made invisible. The past not only can be fabricated in view of what today is politically correct, but also instill an ideological message. However, the merits of Vila’s argument consist in rethinking the belief of a one-sided discourse where identity as social construal is imposed on individuals. In rare conditions this process is unilateral or follows unilinear
progress. To some extent, we are daily subjected to “dual standards” produced by the politic authority. The study-case that precisely reflects this is the exploration of Post Communist Cuba, a chapter authored by Ruben Lopes Cano, or those sections conducted by Patricia Oliart, Frederick Moehn, Laura Cambra & Juan Raffo among others. In this way, Rossana Reguillo discusses an interesting outcome in her analysis of TICS and Music. *Errant Surfing*, her chapter, exhibits a vast experience in methodological issues, triggering a profound discussion on the role played by late-modernity by fragmenting the produced but disconnected identities. These new Tics not only defy the sense of property coined by the founding parents of modernism, but also pose the dilemma of speed that leads to the decline of social ties. Because of time and space, it is almost impossible to describe a book of this caliber, nonetheless I have endeavored to discuss its main explored topics. In perspective, music evinces an ample capacity to express emotional disposition of subjects respecting to their realities, but not only this. It connotes to reactionary counter-actions rebuffing the already-existent disciplinary mechanism of control. Beyond cultural entertainment, music gives a fresh alternative to understand how narrative is constructed, negotiated or even rejected by the self. This represents a painstakingly-achieved book aimed at discussing to what extent discourse exerts considerable influence on societal order. Intended for reaching a wide-range of audience, *Music and Your Culture in Latin America* is a seminal work which surely will pass the test of time.