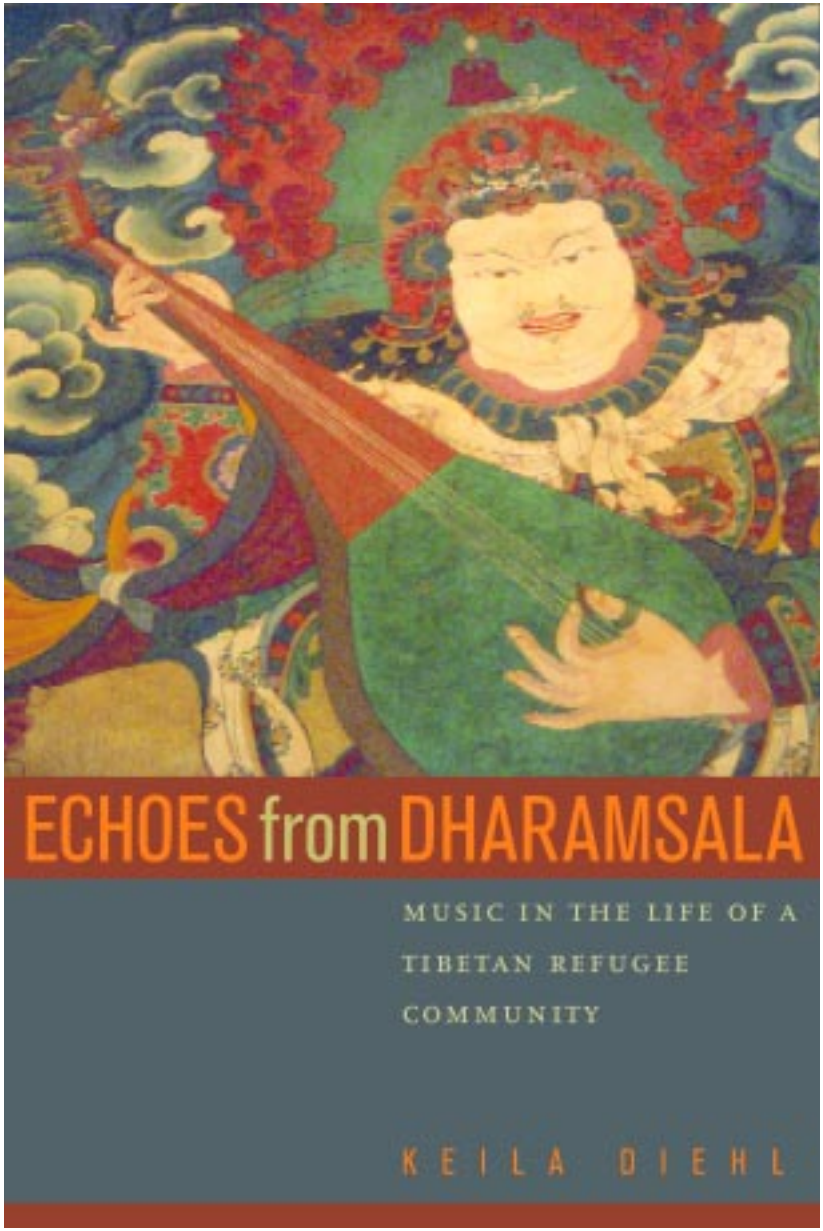
Excerpted from



©2002 by the Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved. May not be copied or reused without express written permission of the publisher.

click here to
BUY THIS BOOK

Introduction

Theory at Home and in the Field

But what of the ethnographic ear?
James Clifford

This book is concerned with the performance and reception of popular music and song by Tibetan refugees living in north India. It strives to convey how Tibetans hear the complex array of sounds that make up the musical life of their community-in-exile and explores the relationship they have with these sounds. The musical "soundscape"[1] (Schafer 1977) most Tibetan refugees live in includes traditional or revitalized Tibetan folk music, Tibetan songs and music perceived to be "Chinese" or "sinicized," Hindi film songs, Western rock, reggae and blues, modern Tibetan music made in exile, and Nepali folk and pop songs.[2] The ways in which different musics resonate with and against one another for Tibetan refugees—the ways these various song traditions are loved, debated, rejected, tolerated, or ignored—are themselves embodiments or performances of the challenges of building and maintaining an ethnically based community in diaspora. More specifically, the complexity of Tibetan refugees' relationships with various song traditions indicates the diversity and unevenness of their relationships with the places and people associated with those songs. These cultural changes and exchanges continually evolve, despite this exiled group's politically informed investment in, and often adamant rhetorical delineation of, cultural boundaries that discourage such ambiguity.

To explore the ways in which cultural boundaries are understood, negotiated, and enacted by Tibetan refugees, this book largely focuses on nontraditional musics that have found a receptive audience in this diasporic community. I emphasize popular foreign genres, such as Hindi film music and Western rock and roll as well as the "modern"[3] Tibetan song genre that has emerged in exile. Modern Tibetan songs, which have not been documented elsewhere, are given special consideration because they bring together in a particularly salient way the foreign and the familiar, the modern and the tra-

ditional; further, they effectively challenge the usefulness of those categories. Most Tibetan refugees genuinely enjoy this new locally produced, Western-influenced Tibetan music, but a close look reveals that tolerance of these modern songs is, in fact, quite qualified. While the formidable social and financial constraints on any Tibetan aspiring to be a musician today are readily apparent, the conservative artistic constraints on the actual music and lyrics of modern Tibetan songs (and on opportunities for and styles of performing them) only become evident when this new genre is considered or "placed" in conversation with all the other musics heard in the Tibetan diaspora in South Asia. Until recently, each of these local sounds—Tibetan, Indian, Nepali, Western, Chinese—have been compartmentalized into specific aural and social contexts, muting the ways in which they in fact constantly echo off one another and inform local notions of the appropriate content and use of each genre. With the advent of live rock concerts and dance parties in Dharamsala and elsewhere in the Tibetan diaspora, events where young Tibetan musicians juxtapose diverse musics in a single place and time, assumed musical and cultural boundaries are being challenged.

One sociologist has likened rock concerts to anthropologist Victor Turner's liminal ritual stage, in the sense that they are "crucibles for social experimentation" that generate both *communitas* and antistructure (Martin 1979: 98).[4] As social events, rock concerts do provide an unprecedented forum for Tibetan refugees to enact their relationships to one another as *punda-tso* (kin) and to the several cultures that inform their daily lives as refugees, often generating moments of deeply felt solidarity. However, these events have also revealed that maintaining the oppositional stance to "otherness" institutionalized by the dominant Tibetan refugee paradigm of cultural preservation and residential isolation in exile now can involve opposing one another, as various "foreign" practices and ideas—such as delight in Hindi film songs and American rap music—have inevitably become incorporated into the lives of many refugees. With these issues in mind, ingroup criticism of Tibetan refugee pop-rock musicians and concerts may be understood to be less about an intolerance for "modern" music itself than it is about discomfort with the creation of a venue where Tibetan refugees can and do publicly enact positive aspects of their relationships with other cultures (understood, by some, as their failure to stay Tibetan in exile).

CONVERSATIONS THIS BOOK IS JOINING

Despite the particular idiosyncracies of the Tibetan refugee case—such as having had a stable leader and relatively stable communities for more than

four decades in exile as well as having received a great deal of international interest in and support for their cause—the experiences of Tibetans living in exile represent an important human resource that variously supports, qualifies, and sometimes contradicts a number of current academic assumptions and desires. Right off, I should briefly state two basic theoretical assumptions of this project that are perhaps by now anthropological truisms. First, I am operating from a belief that "culture" is not only reflected in, but also created by, expressive performances. I consider artful expression to be a domain where the known may potentially be (though certainly is not always) exceeded, a starting point that grants the arts "both the powers and responsibilities of a genuinely political medium" (Leppert and McClary 1987: xvii) and recognizes that "aesthetic perception is necessarily historical" (Bourdieu 1984: 4). The accompanying expansion of interest from product to process and from text to creative and performative contexts parallels a general recognition of culture as continually emergent (R. Williams 1977) in the daily practice of historically positioned individuals and of the meaning of the arts as arising from their use (Geertz 1983: 118).

Second, traditions are selected and ever changing. A number of important publications have problematized the notion of "tradition" by revealing it to be selective, invented, and/or symbolically constructed, articulating a position that has become a given among folklorists and anthropologists. More than twenty years ago, Raymond Williams coined the term *selective tradition* (1977: 115) to refer to an "intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification" (1977: 116). Further, this selective tradition, which offers "a sense of *predisposed continuity,*" is always tied, though often in complex and hidden ways, to explicit contemporary pressures and limits (1977: 116–17). In *The Invention of Culture* (1981), Roy Wagner suggested that because of the innovative and expressive force of tropes, or metaphors, through which we perceive the world, the world is constantly reconstructed. And Hobsbawm and Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) drew attention to those practices "which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (1983: 1). Handler and Linnekin's 1984 article titled "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious" elaborated on the earlier work of Edward Shils (1971, 1981) to suggest that tradition refers to an interpretive process embodying both continuity and discontinuity, rendering it symbolically constituted rather than natural. These works, bolstered by advances in practice theory (especially Bourdieu 1977 and Giddens 1979, 1984) and other efforts to expose the historicity of interpretation

(Jameson 1981) opened the way for a general acceptance that "tradition," rather than being a finished object, is created through the decisions of historically situated individuals in a dialectic with inherited structures.

As I have said, these two positions are well established. The challenge remains, however, to move to the margins of these claims and to examine *how* they work (or don't work) in the field. Wholeheartedly embracing these now-mundane positions poses some risks, including the possible assumption that *all* expressive performances are creative and/or political and that any understanding of "tradition" or "heritage" as nameable or sacred is misguided. In the spirit of exploring the ways in which these fundamental intellectual assertions can both help and hinder attempts to articulate how "culture" is experienced, created, and articulated by participants, I have included below a discussion of the main theoretical conversations that this book is joining.

The general theoretical orientation of this project arose from a dilemma. Throughout my graduate coursework during the early 1990s, I was exposed to mountains of contemporary anthropological theory and ethnographic writing that celebrated transgression, displacement, innovation, resistance, and hybridity (and, significantly, often assumed the co-occurrence of these phenomena). With the theoretical cutting edge slicing its way across borders, genres, bounded entities, and assumed identities and "world beat" music tuning the ears of the planet to every possible combination of sounds, my proposed study of the rock-and-roll music being made by Tibetan refugee youth in India seemed inter*everything* enough to contribute to the conversation in a number of meaningful and timely ways. After I spent a few months living with Tibetan refugees, however, it became clear that many of the displaced people I had chosen to live among and work with were, in fact, striving heartily for emplacement, cultural preservation, and ethnic purity, even though keeping these dreams alive also meant consciously keeping alive the pain and loss inherent in the exile experience rather than letting or helping these wounds heal. While the lives of Tibetan refugees could certainly be *described* in terms of hybridity and pastiche, these characteristics were often regarded as the very unfortunate consequences of refugee life, as embarrassing failures rather than as sources of pride. These natives were proving themselves to be far more conservative than I had been led to expect to find in a study of "culture on the road." At this point, the ethnographer is faced with a clear choice: either dismiss the natives as mystified and carry on or back up and critique the theories that refuse a home to their experiences. Or do a bit of both. This project's aim was quickly altered, and a fruitful dialogue between theory and practice, home and the field, began.

As a result of this dialogue, I have become aware of the distance between much scholarship on displacement and the people whose experiences actually inspired and generated the current trends. My own prioritization of ethnographic detail is in itself a statement of concern regarding the overwhelmingly theoretical nature of the attention being paid to displacement in the social sciences and humanities. This study of echoes between cultures foregrounds a muffled dialogue between anthropology and cultural studies by examining the current interest in, even fetishization of, displacement, marginality, and multiculturalism; the normalization of expectations about how those conditions will be experienced; and the colonization of the spaces of exile and diaspora by theories that are, it sometimes seems, losing touch with the histories and conditions of existence of displaced people in today's world.

Further, many studies that do include ethnographic case studies tend to emphasize the richness, multivocality, dialogism, and creativity of their subjects rather than their deep conservatism, xenophobia, and dreams of emplacement. The current academic suspicion and censure of closure, which has certainly corrected many unfortunate aspects of rigid paradigms of the past, demands that culture be kept open, transient, in flux, and malleable. In many ways this shift is certainly appropriate and realistic today, but one still must examine the local significance of and reactions to the flux and impermanence described. Rather than simply finding a reflection of the celebration taking place in the halls of academia, one may, as I did, bump into deep desires and expectations that cycles of change will and must be completed, that boundaries will protect as well as devastate, and that firm grips will, ultimately, reclaim stability.

To address these issues, I will now consider four basic questions that any reader of this book is entitled, if not bound, to ask: Why study refugees? Why refugee music? Why refugee youth? Why Tibetans? The first three of these questions effectively get at the key issues of displacement and global flow, exilic creativity, the transmission of culture, and cultural hybridity, all of which are central to this project. The last question—Why Tibetans?—will be addressed throughout this discussion and in the brief literature review that follows.

Why Study Refugees?

> But there is a big difference between "matter out of place" in the classification of plants and animals and "matter out of place" when people are in question. For people categorize back.
>
> Liisa Malkki

Why study refugees? Or, considered in a more general framework, what do analyses of transnational and global phenomena add to the cultural critique? Discussions of global and transnational "flow" are flowing so freely themselves in academic and nonacademic discourse that it is important to step back and consider this phenomenon, as anthropologists would consider any other cultural trend.

We generally accept that neither a totally global nor a myopically local perspective is satisfactory, that the ideal perspective lies somewhere between these extremes. On the one hand, the concept of global flow was provoked by the observable reality that unprecedented amounts of people, ideas, and goods are moving across borders owing to improvements in communications and transportation and the intense interdependence of nations. This process has resulted in what anthropologist Arjun Appadurai calls an "altogether new condition of neighborliness" (1990: 2). By drawing on images of interconnectedness and communalism, such as the notion of the "global village," transnational or global paradigms have the potential to contribute to a discourse of universal responsibility for a shared planet and, especially, for those issues that can be said to affect everyone or are apparently "no one's in particular," such as environmental concerns, arms buildup, hunger, and disease. From an anthropological perspective, global discourses have an appealing potential to challenge those stubborn notions of bounded, pure, authentic cultures that have so naturalized the links between people and places and that persist, despite the development of a rhetoric of permeability and transformation that might seem to suggest otherwise. A long-overdue and healthy challenge to the naturalized idea of "cultures" as discrete entities—an assumption that has long allowed the "power of topography to conceal successfully the topography of power" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 8)—is underway, though perhaps to an extreme.

There is the risk that the concept of global flow can transform local actors into passive victims of a homogenizing cultural whitewash with little regard for the ways in which foreign practices and products (like, for example, rock and roll) are chosen, used, and made meaningful locally. Riding the free currents of global flow, it can seem that everything is available to

everyone to patch together in a parodic or resistant manner. Going into the field, one of my main concerns was to challenge the discourse of global flow that emphasized cultural homogenization and overliteral understandings of the "local" that seemed to wipe out the ways "foreign" practices are thoughtfully and selectively incorporated into daily life. At the same time, I was wary of interpretations that seemed to overcompensate for these concerns by reading every local act as romantically unaffected by, or actively resistant to, the sweeping global forces that are clearly at work.

Studying the expressive culture of contemporary refugees complicates easy explanations of culture change provided by the popular idea of global flow, because individuals cut loose from their roots are not necessarily free to borrow cultural elements from here and there and arrange them as they please. As people living on the wrong side of borders, refugees are actually likely to be *less* free to innovate than others (a fact that further problematizes the celebratory view of multiculturalism and hybridity held by many outsiders and some innovative community members). Even though refugees are on the move, they still live in communities that largely strive to keep their members in place; they are not, in Gupta and Ferguson's words, "free-floating monads" (1992: 19). The current debate about tensions between homogenization and heterogenization (Appadurai 1990: 5) is not, after all, limited to the pages of scholarly journals. From a critical local perspective, it can be seen how many of the cultural constraints and opportunities operating in a community are still generated from within the community itself and cannot be simply explained as the indiscriminate results of sweeping international forces.

Displacement is another, albeit related, concept being actively considered in the field. In the 1990s, it became, along with its doppelgänger, *emplacement*, an intellectual metaphor with tremendous momentum. Uprootedness, transgression, transculturalism, genre blurring, boundary crossing, hybridity, and life lived in the interstices are all being celebrated in large part because they are, like the notion of global flow, important vehicles for challenging and complicating earlier, tenacious disciplinary assumptions about boundedness, typicality, and the maintenance of social order. Given this theoretical orientation, it is therefore surprising how few ethnographic studies of refugees have been undertaken, since their lives so profoundly embody the issues filling today's academic conferences and journals.

Refugee lives are inherently experimental and thoroughly modern. As informants, refugees are perhaps uniquely able to discuss the ways in which the cold, hard issues of politics and economics inform their personal and communal experiences, explicitly tied as these are to global forces. It

would seem that these characteristics make refugee populations particularly well poised to receive attention from anthropologists seeking to meet the challenge of moving beyond symbol-and-meaning ethnography and figuring out how to "represent the embedding of richly described local cultural worlds in larger impersonal systems of political economy" (Marcus and Fischer 1986: 77). Marcus and Fischer go on to explain that

> this would not be such a problematic task if the local cultural unit was portrayed, as it usually has been in ethnography, as an isolate with outside forces of market and state impinging upon it. What makes representation challenging and a focus of experimentation is the perception that the "outside forces" in fact are an integral part of the construction and constitution of the "inside," the cultural unit itself, and must be so registered, even at the most intimate levels of cultural process. (1986: 77)

As evidenced by the few fine anthropological studies of refugees that do exist, one is immediately obligated when working with displaced populations to put aside presumed inside/outside or traditional/modern distinctions and focus instead on the often surprising ways in which the local and the global are experienced and described by participants in these communities.[5] Any study of refugee culture also necessarily problematizes the culture concept by exploring the processes of cultural maintenance and reconstruction required when a group of people (and their practices and beliefs) are unhooked from the reinforcing context of "their" place.

Given these interesting and timely advantages, I am concerned that the apparent neglect of refugees shows that the polemical motives generating the new paradigm focused on displacement and global flow indicate that scholars and scholarship remain the focus. It seems that focusing on the degree to which any given research subject appears theoretically useful often overrides understanding and documenting the *experience* of displacement for that person or group.[6] Liisa Malkki, a scholar with similar concerns, claims that, despite all the rhetoric, displacement has in fact been pathologized as an aberration in our persistent "national order of things," causing refugees in turn to be regarded as an abomination (in Mary Douglas's sense) that has been "produced and made meaningful by the categorical order itself, even as they are excluded from it" (1995: 6). She explains further:

> The construction of a national past is a construction of history of a particular kind; it is one that claims moral attachments to specific territories, motherlands or homelands, and posits time-honored links between people, polity and territory. . . . It is precisely the interstitial position of refugees in the system of nation-states that makes their lives uniquely clarifying and enabling for the anthropological rethinking of nation-

> ness, of statelessness, and of the interconnections between historical memory and national consciousness. (1995: 1)

Likening the "structural invisibility" of displaced populations to that of Victor Turner's liminal personae, Malkki makes the observation that refugees are

> no longer unproblematically citizens or native informants. They can no longer satisfy as "representatives" of a particular local culture. One might say they have lost a kind of imagined cultural authority to stand for "their kind" or for the imagined "whole" of which they are or were a part. (1995: 6)[7]

There are many ways in which refugees challenge preexisting understandings of culture as well as traditional anthropological expectations and methodological assumptions. For example, their communities lack the real or imagined social and cultural integrity of stable communities, often harboring together individuals of shared ethnic backgrounds but great linguistic and cultural diversity; their populations can ebb and flow daily; and they expect visitors to become active advocates for their cause. Rather than being drawbacks, these characteristics are, it seems to me, precisely what make refugees intriguing and fruitful subjects of anthropological attention. The challenge is to investigate and honor the experiences of displaced people without making them into heroes. At times it seems the interest in theorizing space and place has provided an allegorical language for postmodern souls who seek to nourish their own feelings of alienation and, in turn, to express their suspicion of those who are still somehow, or desire to be, "in place." Anticipating this kind of appropriation of misfortune, Caren Kaplan cautions against a form of theoretical tourism on the part of the first-world critic, where the margin becomes a linguistic or critical vacation, a new poetics of the exotic (1987: 191). Similarly, Edward Said warns that to dwell on exile, "as beneficial, as a spur to humanism or to creativity, is to belittle its mutilations" (1984: 50). Importantly, it is not only Western scholars who valorize the marginal position of their research subjects. Complicating the picture is the fact that postcolonial "others" themselves (including many Tibetan refugees) often objectify their own marginal cultures for specific, often strategic, ends.

Navigating the rapids between the smoothie swirl of the New Age and the jarring discourse of posteverything academics is tricky and may only get trickier. Steven Feld, writing about the relationship between "world beat" and "world music," predicts that this dialectic between extremes will intensify:

> As the discourse of authenticity becomes more militant and nativistic, more complicated, and more particularized to suit specific interest and taste groups, the activities of appropriation get more overt and outrageous, as well as more subtle, legally sanctioned, accepted, and taken-for-granted. (1995: 110)

Some tactics have been suggested. Writing about the maintenance of ethnic identity some thirty years ago, Fredrik Barth realized that we could no longer justify simply studying the cultural stuff enclosed within boundaries, so he recommended shifting the focus of investigation onto the boundary itself (1969: 90). His observation that boundaries persist "despite a flow of personnel across them" (1969: 90) still rings true in a world in which "as actual places and localities become ever more blurred and indeterminate, *ideas* of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 10). Ulf Hannerz (1987) suggests the concept of "creole culture" as a root metaphor for understanding the international interpenetration of practices, and Gupta and Ferguson insist that we need to "give up naive ideas of communities as literal entities, but remain sensitive to the profound 'bifocality' that characterizes locally lived lives in a globally interconnected world" (1992: 12).

There is, certainly, still a lot to study locally, without denying the influence of "outside" forces; even if you are "out of place" or very vulnerably "in place" you are still, after all, *somewhere*. Keith Basso, for example, has chosen to study at the microlevel of linguistics the affective nature of the relationships Apaches have with "their" landscapes—places that are "always available to their seasoned inhabitants in other than material terms" (1988: 102)—through the poetic use of place-names. Further, Feld (1996) refuses easy interpretations of a New Guinea highlander who sings out to Australian and American audiences:

> However the song satisfies a postmodern narcissism that can see only a world of fragmentary reflections off mirrors of its own shattering, there is something exquisitely local and deeply rooted here. . . . Rather, like all Kaluli songs, this one animates a dialectic of emplacement and displacement and resolves it in a poetics of replacement. (1996: 130)

It is my hope that this study of Tibetan refugees will contribute to the work of those who are asking what this vast process of globalization looks like from different and particular vantage points other than the space shuttle, since the global is, ultimately, experienced locally. Perhaps we should attend to Renato Rosaldo's general observation that anthropologists "have given little thought to how members of other cultures conceive the transla-

tion of cultures" (1988: 83). The tension between homogenization and heterogenization, blur and splatter, proves that countless micronegotiations are going on all the time and suggests that the local-global binary may in fact be unproductive and reductive. Appadurai writes that "at least as fast as forces from metropolises are brought into new societies they tend to become indigenized in one or another way" (1990: 5). Yet, the flow is, as I have said, not a free-for-all. What gets grabbed out of the torrent by whom, what is done with it, and what this *means* to the grabber and his or her family and friends: this is where the global and the local come together and seem to preserve a place for ethnography for a while longer. The whole of the "grabber's" life is not in complete synchrony, after all, with the referential world that first gave birth to the foreign song or blue jeans or posture or religious doctrine they now call their own. People who are "out of place" or whose place has been sucked out from under them or hollowed out by tourists still have local frameworks that enable and constrain them and through which they make sense of their lives. Also important, they also have "alternate fears" (Appadurai 1990: 5) to the Americanization we prioritize.

These theoretical musings are not inert. There are real repercussions, for example, for refugees like the approximately 140,000 Tibetans in limbo in India and elsewhere who are living a life that, through its rupture and mobility, jibes well with the postmodern rhetoric of alienation, amorphousness, and indeterminacy. Between the extremes in Western scholarship of constructing exile as a "literary, entirely bourgeois state" (Said 1986: 121) on the one hand and dismissing it as a space inhabited by "people without culture" on the other (Rosaldo 1988: 79), displaced people are often used theoretically, without engagement with the often not-so-good-to-*live* realities of mass politics. The romanticization of Tibetans in particular is further exacerbated by the long-standing representation of their homeland as "Shangri-La." While this mystical aura has certainly brought unprecedented material and rhetorical support to Tibetan refugees, they have to walk a fine line to keep their sponsors and themselves satisfied that they are succeeding in staying the same, maintaining the purity of their unique culture until they can reclaim their proper place.[8] At the same time, achieving the kind of accessibility necessary to attract aid and sympathy requires great acts of accommodation and change.[9] As Tibetans create communities across national boundaries with friends and family scattered throughout the diaspora and with other disenfranchised "first peoples," they are all the while seeking precisely the literal kind of ethnic community and literal return to a literal place that is in danger of being deluged by global flow.

Notions of the "global" can be, and surely are, as carefully prescribed and attended with interest as any "bounded culture" ever was.[10] Constructed by people situated somewhere, these notions are, it is important to remember, *placed*. Malkki reminds us:

> Observing that more and more of the world lives in a "generalized condition of homelessness"—or that there is truly an intellectual need for a new "sociology of displacement," and new "nomadology"—is not to deny the importance of place in the construction of identities. On the contrary, deterritorialization and identity are intimately linked. . . . To plot only "places of birth" and degrees of nativeness is to blind oneself to the multiplicity of attachments that people form to places through living in, remembering and imagining them. (1992: 37–38)

Studying refugee attachments, memories, and imaginings deeply enriches Yi-Fu Tuan's poignant and political claim that *home* is a meaningless word apart from *journey* and *foreign country* (1977: 102).

Why Refugee Music?

Different people use different music to experience (or fantasize) different sorts of community.

Simon Frith

Even before the fascination with global flow took hold, the "liminal" and "marginal" enjoyed a privileged status in anthropology. Earlier structuralist efforts in ethnography celebrated and sought to decode the systemic unity of cultures and were, therefore, focused on the "typical" or the "normal," while, today, culture making is generally understood in terms of a dialectic between creativity and constraints. Many anthropologists—as well as literary critics, historians, linguists, psychologists, and others—seek to reveal local or in-group taxonomies and thought processes by studying marginalized peoples (ethnic minorities, migrants, slaves, exiles, illegal aliens, colonials, missionaries, prisoners, the mentally ill, and so on). This approach is largely based on the belief that because these people have been removed from or denied the reinforcing context of the familiar—because they have experienced a social displacement that has rendered their "taken-for-granteds" into highly negotiable (if not impossible or illegal) practices in their new environments—they have been forced to acknowledge, at some level, that culture is constructed rather than "natural." That is, because they feel at odds with the status quo, they are better able to tell us what it is.[11] In Homi Bhabha's words, the "truest eye may now belong to the migrant's double vision" (1994: 5). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

has described the "cultural foregrounding effect" of the immigrant experience (1983: 44) in her work with Jewish immigrants in Canada. And Victor Turner articulated the seminal position on this notion of the special vantage point offered by marginality in his classic study of Ndembu ritual when he noted that the "phenomena and processes of mid-transition . . . expose the basic building blocks of culture just when we pass out of and before we re-enter the structural realm" (1967: 110).

Turner also drew attention to the liminal, and later the limin*oid*, as an important space/time for creative work. The editors of a collection of essays published in honor of Turner claim that his use of the three-stage model (separation, limen, and aggregation) has "set the agenda for the study of creativity in culture" in its movement from accepted configurations, through their dissolution into constituent elements to their subsequent reformulation (Lavie et al. 1993: 3).[12] A study of the role of music in the lives of refugees, particularly the kinds of music being invented by displaced people, explores this presumed connection between creativity and marginalization, in particular the connection between artful expression and place.

Gradually, for the past twenty years or so, greater importance has been granted to artistic expression, performance, style, and aesthetics in ethnographic and ethnomusicological studies. Due mainly, I assume, to a similar tendency in the social sciences generally, most of these studies have been conducted in communities that are firmly "in place," resulting in a number of thorough and evocative publications that focus on the connections between creativity and the natural and/or culturally constructed environments in which people live and have lived "forever."[13] Thanks to an extension of disciplinary boundaries from using a single culture as the framework for describing or analyzing an aesthetic tradition to embracing a multicultural frame that takes diversity as the norm (cf. Schramm 1989), other studies have investigated performances involving artistic practices or performers that are themselves "out of place."[14]

By recognizing and focusing on the importance of *place*—opened up to include emplacement, displacement, and the reclaiming of place—in the production and received meanings of artistic performances, researchers interested in aesthetics can take further steps to locate their work in, and make important contributions to, current interdisciplinary discussions concerning the fate of received notions of "culture" and the unprecedented movement of people and ideas in today's world. Whether looking at tribal healing songs in the Malaysian rainforest, the incorporation of Western classical music in Caribbean steel bands, or the persistence of Indian songs among the descendants of indentured laborers in Fiji, most studies of performance explore the ten-

sions between tradition and innovation, exclusion and inclusion, and the interaction between certain aesthetic principles or "essentials" that over time have become iconic with a particular style and newly invented or borrowed practices. This scholarship foregrounds the intertextuality between history/convention and creativity/emergence and helps theorize the conversation between the synchronic and diachronic dimensions of cultural practice.

I chose to focus my work on the musical life of a group of displaced refugees to further explore these tensions—tensions that are simultaneously a source of deep cultural anxiety and of vitality—in a situation in which *both* the performers and the practices themselves are involuntarily and indefinitely "out of place." Under such social, political, and historical conditions, issues of style and aesthetics are highly charged emotionally and politically, granting artistic performances particular importance. In the Tibetan case, the arts play a central role in officially choreographed and privately initiated efforts to entertain and "place" Tibetan refugees, to negotiate an essential or shared Tibetan identity in exile, to celebrate and preserve the diversity of Tibetan culture, and to publicize the Tibetan cause internationally.[15]

In exile, for example, Tibetan performances such as public stagings of traditional folk operas (*lhamo*) entertain their audiences, as they always have done, but they are now highly marked events, less frequent, produced with great difficulty, and inevitably altered by the physical, financial, and other constraints of exile. Further, these events index "how things were," evoking happiness by means of their similarity with past performances in the homeland but also evoking loss, due to the performance's inevitable shortcomings. In this way, expressive performances can geographically "place" exiled Tibetan performers and audiences precisely by reminding them that they are *not* at home (which is both true and politically important to reiterate). At the same time, however, these individuals are participating in a moment in which sounds, images, and feelings fleetingly coalesce to create a place that feels like home, so that, potentially, "the expression of the desire for home becomes a substitute for home [and] embodies the emotion attendant upon the image" (Seidel 1986: 11). Simon Frith suggests that it is this "interplay between personal absorption into music and the sense that it is, nevertheless, something out there, something public [that] makes music so important in the cultural placing of the individual in the social" (1987: 137). Hamid Naficy understands the importance of reconnecting with familiar styles and traditions as a way of "reassuring the self that it will not disappear or dissolve in exile" (1993: 118).

Many exilic performances comprise a continual ritual reenactment of the memories of displacement, violence, and loss that are central to the

shared experience of exile, memories that bond the Tibetan diasporic community together. These performances are emergent social constructions through which, in Edward Schieffelin's words, "each participant creates the meaning that the ritual has for him or her" (1993: 293). I am, then, thinking about exile as a performance space, which, like the ritual space described by Schieffelin,

> must be continually re-created during the course of the performance [which] means that the medium must commit the audience to the task of participating in its construction, and this is accomplished in large part through the spirit's songs. (1993: 277)

Naficy has argued that rituals gain additional prominence when the actual social boundaries of the community are undermined, blurred, or weakened (1993: 91). I suggest that the same importance is accorded to both traditional and modern artful performances in the Tibetan refugee community, events that are both painful and deeply gratifying through their embodiment and confirmation of a recognizable Tibetan style and whose purpose is to establish a "hegemony of feelings" (Keil 1985: 126). This attention to what is and is not "Tibetan" is exaggerated in the multicultural context of exile and speaks directly to the political nature of "taste" (cf. Bourdieu 1984). It also underscores the complexity of the process of innovation, appropriation, and naturalization by which particular sounds, grooves, and timbres—the musical version of which R. Murray Schafer calls a community's "soundmarks" (1977: 10)—come to be associated with a particular political-geographical-ideological entity.

It is surprising that artistic expression, performance, aesthetics, and/or style are only infrequently mentioned in studies of exiles, refugees, and diasporic populations.[16] Only a few studies I know of specifically address and ethnographically situate and theorize the aesthetic practices of displaced peoples. These include Naficy's work on the mediated art (primarily television) being produced and consumed by wealthy Iranian exiles in Los Angeles (1993) and Adelaida Schramm's brief articles on the musical tastes and practices of Vietnamese refugees in a Philippines refugee camp (1989) and in New Jersey (1986). To be fair, this dearth may have more to do with the relatively few anthropological or cultural studies of refugees and exiles at all, compared with the vast literature on, for example, migration and development, which draws largely on modernization and dependency theories. There is, however, a large and relevant literature that has well described and theorized the centrality of artistic cultural practice in other situations in which the identity of a person or an entire group is somehow

vulnerable or threatened. These studies have addressed the salient role of artistic expression and performance among, for example, migrants to cities (de Gerdes 1995, Turino 1984, 1987), groups seeking political independence (Handler 1988), and ailing governments seeking to project desired images and maintain the appearance of national coherence (Buchanan 1991).

The issue here is most basically expressed, perhaps, as that of the effectiveness of the arts—and, for the purposes of this study, the effectiveness of music in particular—in contributing to and making believable the placement of the individual in the social, and the placement of the social in the world. In an observation that can be extended to artistic performances generally, I believe, Frith has noted that "music can stand for, symbolize *and* offer the immediate experience of collective identity" (1987: 140). Feld proposes the term *acoustemology* to argue the importance of "acoustic knowing" for understanding the "interplay of sound and felt balance in the sense and sensuality of emplacement, of making place" (1996: 97). Performances and aesthetic choices can, it is argued here, place individuals and groups in relation to others, based on their views of themselves, their views of the other, and the other's views of them. For refugees, this affective placement can meaningfully contribute to, confirm, or challenge the relationships they have with the various cultures and countries that feature prominently on the maps of their lives.

Why Refugee Youth?

> Perhaps, like many other adults, anthropologists view youth as not to be taken very seriously: occasionally amusing, yet potentially dangerous and disturbing, in a liminal phase.
>
> Helena Wulff

Socialization has been described by Bambi Schieffelin as an "interactive process between knowledgeable members and novices (children) who are themselves active contributors to the meanings and outcomes of interactions with others" (1990: 17). The interactive nature of the approach described in general terms by Schieffelin is exaggerated in a refugee situation, in which individuals of all ages are learning how, or are being (re)socialized, to live in a new way.[17] Narratives, habits, and songs explaining, facilitating, and reflecting on this experience of (re)socialization are being performed and responded to by Tibetan refugees at every stage of life, and the transmission of the knowledge and morals these expressions encode and engender is flowing in all possible directions between generations. For this reason, this study, which emphasizes the musical tastes and creativity of Tibetan

refugee youth, poses a challenge to the generally accepted notion that "culture" (however traditionally or radically this concept is defined) is transmitted unidirectionally from older members of a society to the younger generation in "Indian file" (Connerton 1989: 39), a paradigm that effectively denies children and youth agency as cultural innovators. This book, then, is at once a study of youth culture and of youth-in-culture.

Although this multidirectional socialization process may be exaggerated in displaced groups, I believe that this dynamic is not unique to them. It has, however, been largely ignored in anthropological literature. Logotheti and Trevarthen point out that in anthropological writings it has generally been assumed that as soon as children acquire a separate self, they simply imitate adults, giving rise to metaphors such as "copycat," "primitive human," "personality trainee," or "monkey," which portray the growing child as an imperfect person (1989: 180). Indeed, a remarkable lack of attention is paid to young people in anthropological research, a void difficult to justify in a discipline concerned with the transmission, and transformation, of culture across generations.[18]

The challenge is to recognize the creativity of youths—for example, the metacommunicative power of play to comment on and transform everyday experience (Logotheti and Trevarthen 1989: 80)—without denying the degree to which youth are, in fact, formed during their "formative" years by the people and institutions in whose care they find themselves. I have found the theoretical efforts of Anthony Giddens (1979, 1984), Marshall Sahlins (1985, 1990), and, to a lesser degree, Pierre Bourdieu (1977) to reconcile the relationship between determining structures and individual agency extremely helpful in thinking about the simultaneously constraining and enabling dynamic that accounts for both structural continuity and change. These scholars recognize that structures and cultural categories themselves only exist in everyday practice, where they are necessarily modified by "unintended consequences" (Giddens 1979: 27) or are submitted to "empirical risks" (Sahlins 1985: ix) generated by the uniqueness of each interaction. Bambi Schieffelin provides an example of this dynamic in a study of language socialization in which she convincingly presents the child as an "active learner" (and, therefore, as a socialization modifier) by emphasizing the degree to which addressee identity affects the form and content of all utterances, as the ethnography of speaking and conversational analysis literatures have well established (1990: 19).

Extending this idea of active agency even further, it has been generally assumed in recent writings on youth culture that what youth do with the information and resources they formally and informally receive tends to

be resistant or deviant (Wulff 1995: 1). Within this focus lie different interpretations, with some writers deploring the state of today's youth and others, notably those intellectuals adhering to the subcultural theory that emerged in Britain in the early 1970s, celebrating youth culture as bravely eclectic and antiestablishment. Stanley Cohen criticizes the latter position by noting that the "assumption of a monolithic drift to repression" (1980: xxv) has resulted in a "*too respectful* enterprise of picking up on the subcultural detritus of musical notes, hair styles, safety pins, zips and boots," which often strikes false and condescending notes (1980: xxviii). "We cannot," he concludes, "expect average kids to deviate with genius" (1980: xxix).

The Tibetan refugee case complicates this debate because the idealized path of resistance in this community involves pursuing (*as* a community) emplacement, stability, cultural preservation, and ethnic purity. Children and youth are those for whom the Tibetan government-in-exile's policies, the refugee community's concern about the future of Tibetan culture, and the identity-challenging realities of life in exile come together most complexly. A tension between the self-conscious honor/burden of being the bearers of their heritage and the seemingly unlimited opportunities for innovation in exile informs the socialization of Tibetan refugee children from the moment they are born and has been institutionalized in the structure of their schools. Despite a well-articulated academic curriculum and general commitment to cultural preservation, what is taught is not passed on unchanged, since Tibetan refugee youth are living undeniably displaced, fragile, and culturally hybrid lives. As Margaret Nowak, like many others, found in her fieldwork with young Tibetan refugees,

> In the modern context . . . life styles are much more a matter of individual choosing, for here social consensus and homogeneity increasingly give way to the pluralism that marks this more complex and specialized mode of existence. In brief, without moral or philosophical comment, for those living in the situation of greater complexity, the increased differentiation means more options. (1980: 219)

Differentiation is generally played down and even considered regrettable in the Tibetan refugee community. The key for the ethnographer in this situation is to move beyond a fascination with *formal* hybridity—the prayer beads entwined with digital watches, the country and rock music blaring at Himalayan dance parties—and pay attention instead to the ways in which the elements of this particular youth culture are chosen, reproduced, and even standardized. This attention to the motivations behind and feelings about the consumption of cultural elements from here and there reveals a

generation of young people who are, for the most part, remarkably conservative and conventional in their beliefs and morals. In this community, after all, the typical kind of resistance framed in generational terms (youth versus parents or youth versus establishment) is greatly overshadowed by another kind of resistance framed in political terms (Tibetans versus Chinese).

Drawing largely on Mikhail Bakhtin's articulation of the political and aesthetic dynamics of the carnivalesque (1984) and his distinction between conscious and unconscious (organic or deliberate) hybridizations (1981: 358), scholars working on the issue of "fuzzy boundary problems" (Briggs 1988: 17) by analyzing "hybrid genres" are committed to moving away from the received "brand-name system" (Jameson 1981: 107) of genres and toward an understanding of genres as being continually transformed, combined, confronted and reimagined, a process Dell Hymes has called "metaphrasis" (1981: 87). This move from pure to hybrid genres clearly parallels the theoretical moves described in earlier parts of this introduction, which call for a shift of attention from notions of bounded, placed "cultures" to the creation of communities that are multiple, mixed, performed, scattered, and emergent.

To bring these observations to bear on the musical tastes of Tibetan refugee youth, the sounds they listen to and make are diverse and often hybrid. However, this hybridity of *form* does not necessarily indicate a tolerance for transgression. Rather, as will be discussed, I have found that the hybridity of modern Tibetan music, for example, is often predictable and repetitive to the extent that it may be better described as comprising a new definable genre. The composition and performance of new Tibetan songs by young refugees are certainly creative processes, but they are not as radical as one might expect within a paradigm that pairs newness and eclecticism with deviance. I suggest, therefore, that the acknowledgment, even encouragement, of artistic creativity and innovation in this community need not be at odds with the goal of maintaining and replicating traditional Tibetan genres of artistic expression in exile.[19] In fact, this book will show that persistent community constraints on the elaboration of Tibetan artistic genres—for example, limitations on the creative development of modern Tibetan music—may actually be increasing the appeal of foreign options for refugee youth, despite their commitment to tradition.

ZONES OF INVISIBILITY

My anthropological training, research findings, and concern for the future of Tibetans have all compelled me to attempt partially to fill in some of the gaps

left by the many idealized accounts of Tibetans. Through its generally uncomplicated celebration of political solidarity and cultural preservation in exile, much of the available information on Tibetan refugees exhibits a troubling collusion with the community's own idealized self-image. However understandable this bipartisan process of romanticization may be (and it is a process with a long and well-documented history in the case of Tibetan-Western relations), its positive effects do not come without a price. An extended stay with Tibetan refugees taught me that public representations of Tibetan-ness and the lives of Tibetans have tended to smooth grossly over the striking unevenness of experience encompassed in refugee lives.

My concern is with the "zones of invisibility" (Rosaldo 1988: 79)—and, in the case of music, zones of inaudibility—created in large part by the well-intended selectivity at work in the Tibetan community and among scholar-advocates, however compassionate the motivations for such partial representations may be. After living and working closely with Tibetan refugees of diverse ages and backgrounds and documenting their conflicted lives, I am convinced that exploring the "not-saids" in this exiled community is crucial. My aim is not to dwell expressly on the negative aspects of the Tibetan refugee community (this ethnography is, indeed, full of moments of intense caring, solidarity, and celebration); rather, it is to make more believable the accomplishments of this group by complementing those accounts with the tales of disillusionment, in-group tensions, and change that make those accomplishments meaningful. I do not intend to present myself as an objective observer who simply tells all without an interested perspective. Because I am concerned about Tibetan refugees, I care about the long-term effects of idealistic representations and expectations, however positive and practical these may seem at the present moment.

Western and Tibetan accounts have together played an important role in the development of an ideal Tibet and, by transference, of an ideal Tibetan refugee. The following overview of representations is meant primarily to define important trends in research and publishing on Tibetans, to lay the groundwork for understanding the ways in which these trends inform the multiple and interwoven contemporary discourses about identity and representation that are both brought to bear on and produced by Tibetan refugees. Because public interest in Tibet in the "West" is quite keen, there is a large body of popular literature on Tibetans that I have summarized in chapter 4, in the context of a discussion of Western-Tibetan relations. The brief survey here focuses on the ways this book engages in conversation with well-established lines of historical and academic interest in Tibetan Studies, even as I am attempting to create new spaces of inquiry in that field.

A survey of representations of Tibet must be anchored to a discussion of "Shangri-La," a term that can refer to a place, to no place, to a psychological desire, or to a heavenly realm, among other possibilities. Whether the concept is embraced uncritically or battled against, it is a literary, cultural, and experiential legacy with which anyone writing about Tibetans today must grapple. This trope has become deeply implicated in descriptions and studies of Tibet, and in the self-conscious construction of personal and national identity by Tibetans themselves, a native perspective regrettably excluded from Bishop's seminal book on the topic (1989) but wrestled with directly by Lopez (1998) and Schell (2000), among others.

Rather like the life-sustaining atmosphere of the particular Shangri-La described in James Hilton's 1933 novel *Lost Horizon* (an atmosphere that enables its residents to enjoy full lives for centuries), the very notion of "Shangri-La" seems itself continually to fuel interest in Tibet and, in turn, to be rejuvenated by this attention. It is only quite recently, and for the most part only in academic circles, that the use and usefulness of the Shangri-La paradigm—for both non-Tibetans and Tibetans—has come under critical scrutiny, as scholars, like Hilton's protagonist Conway, "hanker after some more definite reason for envying the centenarian" (1933: 127).[20] Is it really wonderful for an individual (or a root metaphor) to live on and on? It is precisely the relationship between Shangri-La and time (or timelessness) that provides a useful metaphor and foil for the ways "Tibetan culture" has been conceived in the various popular, religious, political, and anthropological trajectories that together comprise the literature on Tibet:

> When he sat reading in the library, or playing Mozart in the music room, [Conway] often felt the invasion of a deep spiritual emotion, as if Shangri-La were indeed a living essence, distilled from the magic of the ages and miraculously preserved against time and death. (Hilton 1990: 138)

The romantic image of Tibet as an unchanging, medieval sanctuary of natural and spiritual mystery has its roots in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century travel literature produced by missionaries and adventurers and has been perpetuated ever since by authors, photographers, and filmmakers fascinated by the "roof of the world." It was, for many, a "forbidden" land, by virtue of its vague political status nestled among three great empires, its naturally enclosing topography, and the conscious efforts by Tibetans to remain uncontaminated by the outside world.[21] In fact, of course, Tibetans were actively involved with a large number of other countries over the centuries, particularly in their roles as traders. Yet the enduring image of Tibet is of a "forbidden" land:

> In the heart of ageless Asia, brooding darkly in the shadow of the unknown, is to be found a veritable explorers' paradise—Tibet, the strange and fascinating, forbidden land of magic and mystery . . . where the opposites are kin and the extremes go hand in hand. (Forman 1936: vii)

Although a "desire to assault this 'forbidden Acropolis' " (Forman 1936: ix) may have been the initial inspiration for many of the expeditions to Tibet that resulted in the numerous travel accounts published between 1900 and 1950, few adventurers seem to have had their fantasies of Shangri-La confirmed. Most accounts focus on the hardships of travel and on appalling and gruesome local customs and serve to glorify the author now safely back at home after being imprisoned and tortured by Tibetan authorities or having nearly drowned in a glacial river. Elliot Sperling (1992) has pointed out the tendency of late-twentieth-century Tibetophiles to read the early literature narrowly and to downplay the bad experiences and feelings of individual travelers. He accuses Bishop, for example, of "overlooking [Alexandra] David-Neel's lack of reticence in pointing out instances of what she did not hesitate to label Tibetan cruelty or, in regard to sham magic, gullibility" (1992: 350). In so doing, Sperling claims, Bishop is "actually creating his own imaginative construction of 'Tibetan Travel Writing,' much as he pictures his subjects constructing an imaginative 'Tibet' (and much as those who reproach Western scholars for their construction of 'The Orient' have in many respects constructed 'Orientalism')" (1992: 350).

Part of the enduring romance with a particular idea of Tibet is the clear disciplinary bias within Tibetan Studies toward the monastic culture of pre-1950 Tibet, particularly since the Dalai Lama fled into exile. Soon after 1959, the materials that had been successfully smuggled into exile by fleeing monks and laypeople were collected together and assessed, and translation efforts were immediately undertaken in an effort to educate the world about Tibetan Buddhism (for spiritual and political reasons). This religious work has remained a priority for both Western and Tibetan scholars. The results of this trend are manifold. Keen attention has been paid to the preservation of texts and monastic practices in exile, but there is a significant lack of information about Tibet's historical and modern lay populations. Notably, and perhaps signaling an expansion of interest, in the past decade or so a number of studies and publications retaining a Buddhist focus have approached the subject matter from an anthropological, rather than primarily religious, perspective.[22]

The prioritization of religious practices over lay life is reflected in the area of Tibetan music as well. A number of fine studies of Buddhist musi-

cal theory and practice exist, but very little substantial work on Tibetan lay music and song.[23] "Tibetan music" remains virtually synonymous with "Buddhist ritual music" in the minds of both musicologists and Tibetans themselves. Often when I told Tibetans that I was interested in Tibetan folk music, they would respond, "We don't really have music as such" and suggest that my efforts would be much better spent learning about the rich instrumental traditions of India. In 1979 the editors of a special issue of *Asian Music* devoted to (mostly sacred) Tibetan music introduced their collection with this observation:

> Western studies of Tibetan music have only recently begun to shift from a kind of missionary-in-the-cannibal-pot cartoon stereotype of simple nomad folksongs and chaotic ritual noises towards an appreciation of the special forms and functions of music in a unique civilization. (Ellingson and Slobin 1979: 1)

In fact, apart from collections of folk song texts, very little has ever been written about "simple nomad folksongs" or other Tibetan lay traditions.[24]

With few exceptions, the efforts of many native and foreign commentators and scholars to document Tibetan culture in exile are descriptive evaluations based on time- and space-bounded notions of the "rich culture heritage of Tibet" that are dependent on a reductive binary of "preservation" and "loss." Until very recently, the myth of Shangri-La seems to have been uncritically extended to incorporate equally powerful expectations and desires for Tibetan refugees to survive the experience of exile unchanged as well. This hopeful rhetoric is eerily anticipated in *Lost Horizons* in the High Lama's dying words to the Westerner he has recognized as his successor:

> "I believe that you will live through the storm. And after, through the long age of desolation, you may still live, growing older and wiser and more patient. You will conserve the fragrance of our history and add to it the touch of your own mind. You will welcome the stranger, and teach him the rule of age and wisdom; and one of these strangers, it may be, will succeed you when you are yourself very old. Beyond that, my vision weakens, but I see, at a great distance, a new world stirring in the ruins, stirring clumsily but in hopefulness, seeking its lost and legendary treasures. And they will all be here, my son, hidden behind the mountains in the valley of the Blue Moon, preserved as by miracle for a new Renaissance." (1990: 158)

Although the preoccupation with pre-Occupation Tibet, and with a miracle that will preserve its "lost and legendary treasures," still dominates the field of Tibetology, anthropological and sociological interest in Tibetan

culture in exile has, in fact, grown since the mid-1970s. By that time, it had become clear that the refugees were not likely to return to Tibet any time soon, and the settlements or "camps" in India and Nepal had taken on a certain feeling of permanence. Also, after a decade of closed borders during the Cultural Revolution, the death of Mao Tse-tung in 1976 opened the way for handfuls of Westerners to visit Tibet. However, rather than being replaced by the increase in accounts of Tibet published during this opening-up period, the prevalent nostalgia for a pristine and timeless Tibet was given new life, since the image of Shangri-La contrasted so dramatically and appealingly with the disruption and chaos of the Chinese invasion, the Cultural Revolution, and the squalor of the refugee camps in India and Nepal. Along these same lines, many recent publications about Tibetans are primarily interested in "pure survivals"—native cultural elements that have not been "torn away by the roughness of modern society" (Forbes 1989: 159). As Calla Jacobson has noted,

> Material and environmental conditions are, anywhere that refugees settle, vastly different from those of pre-invasion Tibet. Yet there is little discussion of how Tibetan cultural practices, and the everyday lives of Tibetan people, are changing in response to such conditions. (1994: 13)

There are, of course, exceptions to this romantic trend.[25] In particular, new scholarship on Tibetans being produced by graduate students and young professors, much of it unpublished as yet, indicates a hopeful shift in interests that may well finally establish anthropological, artistic, literary, and sociological concern with the lives of laypeople as valuable fields of inquiry in Tibetan Studies. These studies are honest, sometimes jarring, accounts that consider refugee life holistically and include critiques of the field's historically selective vision in their design. Much of this new work, including this book, sympathetically but critically examines not only the effects of scholarly biases but also the particular effects of the dominant paradigm of "cultural preservation" espoused by the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala on the everyday lives of refugees. "Shangri-La" is now being examined from the inside out as a rhetorical trope employed as frequently and perhaps more fervently by Tibetans themselves than by Westerners. After four decades in exile, many Tibetans realize not only that the utopian dream is still an important source of hope but also that it can be a source of disappointment and frustration that has very real effects on individuals and communities who are raised to feel responsible for its actual, though unlikely, realization.

A glance at the kinds of topics being addressed and at the approaches being applied by this new generation of scholars reveals a general concern

for the long-term effects of exile on Tibetan refugees, greater attention to the influences of Chinese socialization and culture on the refugee population, and a generally more global perspective that examines the intersections of international discourses and practices (academic, human rights, New Age, "fourth world") with local traditional and hegemonic discourses in refugees' daily lives. Even among young scholars of Tibetan Buddhism there is evidence of increasing interest in change, rather than only in preservation, and greater attention to contextualized religious practice than to isolated texts. Two recent collections of articles edited by Frank Korom address these issues and provide a substantial indication of the direction Tibetan Studies is heading (1997a, 1997b).

Yet a crucial gap in Tibetan Studies remains. Very little anthropological work has been conducted in Tibet itself in the last thirty years.[26] Tibet remains "forbidden" for many today owing to the expense of traveling there, the erratic visa and travel policies of the Chinese government, and fear of censorship and even imprisonment. Further complicating the situation is the fact that most Tibetans and many Westerners have tended to be suspicious of scholars who do manage to conduct fieldwork in Tibet, assuming that because they were allowed to do research they must have had to cooperate with the Chinese authorities and compromise the integrity of their findings. Even publications that attempt to balance misrepresentations made by parties on both sides of the Tibet Question (cf. Grunfeld 1987) are often dismissed as pro-Chinese by Tibetans and their Western sympathizers. As a result of these various constraints, much of the best anthropological documentation of Tibetan culture *in Tibet* is arguably still contained in the literature produced fifty or one hundred years ago.[27] Although a certain amount of cultural scholarship is being undertaken by Chinese and Tibetan academics in Tibet, the publications that reach foreign audiences are generally limited to the unabashedly propagandistic material issued, often in the English language, by the Chinese government. It seems, however, that scholarship and history itself are refusing to collude with essentialist discourses from inside and outside Tibet that attempt to authoritatively narrate the stories of Tibet and Tibetans from narrow and highly politicized perspectives.[28]

This raises the complicated question of advocacy, in particular the need for each scholar or individual working with or documenting Tibetans to negotiate a balance between sympathy and scholarship that has integrity and is sustainable. The American Anthropological Association's ethics statement has as its summum bonum the "welfare of subjects," a position that is wide open to interpretation. The issue of advocacy gets sticky, of

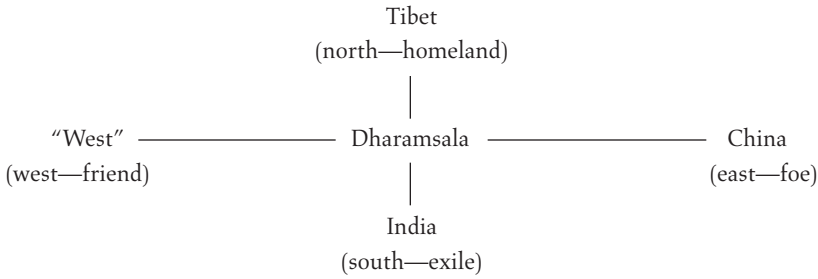
course, when two ethnic groups are in conflict or when there is in-group discord. In the case of Tibetan refugees, the "subjects" generally assume and expect that foreigners working in their community are supportive of the Tibetan Cause and will maintain a proactive role in "getting China out of Tibet." This perception is generally confirmed as accurate by the content and tone of most of the documentary work being produced by Westerners. The effect this tacit agreement has had on anthropological scholarship, particularly its role in creating the "zones of invisibility" referred to earlier, is a thematic concern that underlies this project.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN OF THIS BOOK

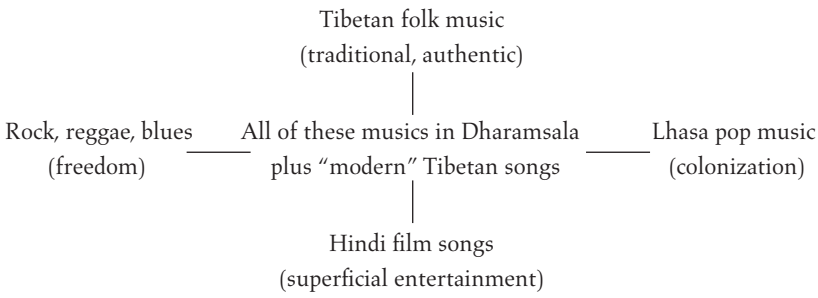
Both the content and design of this book are informed by the theme of echoes, as both a theoretical notion and as experience. Places, musical sounds and rhythms, languages, generations, individuals, and groups echo off one another in ways that are particularly complex and multiple for refugees. Intellectual theories echo off one another as well and this dynamic is another thread that winds throughout this text. In keeping with this theme, the chapters are meant to echo off one another, too, as do the sounds and places they discuss. I have chosen a narrative structure and voice that favor and depend on allowing the chapters to build on and ricochet off of one another as the layers of experience they articulate do for Tibetan refugees. It is the reader's task, then, to keep the stories and issues presented in each chapter in mind as they unfold, in order to experience the confusion, dissonance, and cultural richness that are revealed through the cumulative realization that these aspects of Tibetan refugee life are all happening continually and simultaneously.

To allow for in-depth discussion of each of the musics (and, in turn, the places and people) that contribute to the multilayered culture of Tibetan refugees in Dharamsala, and to highlight the physical, historical, and personal interfaces between this particular community and its wider context, I have constructed this book around a circular representation of places and sounds imagined from the generalized perspective of a Tibetan refugee living in exile in north India. This geographical and conceptual mandala places Dharamsala, as most Tibetan refugees would, at the intersection of perpendicular axes, a space located somewhere between Tibet (north) and India (south), China (east) and the "West." These spatial coordinates are, further, widely imbued with general qualities that are informed by both experience and hearsay. The common oppositional pairing of homeland

(Tibet) and exile (India), friend (the "West") and foe (China) by Tibetan refugees further substantiates this design:



This simple diagram is, in turn, the foundation for an analogous mandala of musics that may be overlaid onto it. This move is meant to convey that, despite current academic discomfort with cultural boundedness and with the attribution of discrete origins to people and their practices, particular musical genres are, in fact, perceived by most Tibetans as aural icons of particular places and cultures and therefore can and should be analyzed from this local vantage point. As they do with the geographical places that anchor this mandala, most Tibetans also attribute the musics that make up Dharamsala's soundscape with specific qualities based again on a combination of historical information, personal experience, and desires. The common contrasting perceptions of traditional Tibetan music (meaningful and authentic) and Indian pop music (superficial and entertaining), Chinese music (colonial and oppressive) and Western rock (liberating and risky) both grow out of and inform how each of these sounds, their geopolitical origins, and the people who make them are understood locally. These perceptions also deeply inform the place that has been created in Dharamsala—the literal yet liminal intersection of the places and musics mentioned—for the new genre of "modern Tibetan songs" being made in exile:



In subsequent chapters, each of these song categories will be discussed from the perspectives of Dharamsala's Tibetan refugees, as will the links and echoes between Dharamsala and each of the places the songs index. I emphasize here and throughout this book that what complicates this apparently cut-and-dry native point of view is the fact that, despite these tidy conceptual categories and the strong investments people have in their integrity, sounds and musical boundaries are, ultimately, immaterial and are therefore felt and experienced in personal and varied ways. Ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin nicely expresses the cognitive and experiential gaps between the discrete, freestanding cultural forms we often desire and consequently perceive and the fluidity of these "forms" when considered more objectively:

> Amid a set of personal landscapes we can identify formations, musical Stonehenges, that stand free and look communal. Like that ancient pile, such structures are cryptic, mutely posing puzzles of who shaped them and what they represent. Unlike those changeless megaliths, musical monuments are mobile, flexible, more like a mirage. The nearer you get, the more their rigid outlines shift in the shimmering air. Less poetically, what I mean is that we make temporary shelters of our musical materials, not only personally, but collectively. Up close, what's "Irish," "American," or "Irish-American" looks like the work of tent-dwellers, not stone-raisers after all. (1993: x)

In this book about Tibetan refugees and their relationships to music, the categories of "tent-dweller" and "stone-raiser" are complicated and shown to be useful but not exclusive. It is *not* my goal to reveal by means of formal musical analysis that these people's deep and often-articulated belief and investment in a monumental "Tibetan tradition"—a Himalayan Stonehenge, if you will—is a hollow construction. I am primarily concerned with how various genres are experienced and narrated by Tibetan refugees as individuals and as a community. At the same time, my fieldwork experience has compelled me to consider frankly and to include stories and events that point to the significant effects cultural "megaliths" or traditions have on a community's life and, in particular, on the creative efforts of its younger members. The wide variety of relationships to sounds that I encountered during my stay in Tibetan refugee communities, perceived more widely as a variety of relationships to cultures, is exciting to some Tibetans and troublesome to others. To the former, an openness to new, more nomadic ways of "being Tibetan" is healthy, modern, and creative; to the latter, such openness to the fruits of unintended mobility indicates a weakening of commitment to community, with the blurring of

boundaries signaling the end of the struggle and the fading away of any hope of returning to the homeland.

Starting with the exilic center (Dharamsala) and working clockwise (the auspicious direction for Tibetans) from Tibet (considered as both the traditional homeland and as a territory under Chinese rule) to India and the "West," the chapters that follow document and analyze all the issues raised in this introduction, showing how various traditions influence Tibetan tastes and identities in exile in material and less tangible ways. Sound values—ideas and feelings about which sounds are beautiful, authentic, foreign, or ugly—are shown throughout the book to be a crucial component in the embodied processes of self- and boundary-making that contribute to feelings of both solidarity and anxiety in exile. Because musical expression is the focus of this book, all the chapters are grounded in live performances that I attended, recorded, and sometimes participated in over the course of my year in India. Memories, associations, and stories ricochet off particularly important songs and crystallize the issues being theoretically and ethnographically explored in each given chapter, reinforcing that my analysis always emerges from performed sounds and relationships.

Chapter 1 introduces Dharamsala, my primary field site, and many of the people and local places that are central to this book's story. My discussion of Dharamsala is grounded in the concept of pilgrimage because of this Himalayan town's dual character as a holy destination for many Tibetan refugees and as a place they all hope to eventually leave. I suggest that the resulting tension between simultaneously feeling at home and out of place informs the emotional power songs have as icons of places for Tibetan refugee listeners.

Chapter 2 presents some of the imagined and tangible ways in which the roots of the Tibetan homeland penetrate and are selectively cultivated in Indian soil, thereby highlighting the historicity of popular memory and what comes to be called "tradition." Through descriptive accounts of traditional opera performances, school plays, and other musical events, I discuss efforts by the Dalai Lama's government-in-exile to preserve what is commonly referred to as the "rich cultural heritage of Tibet." I also discuss the benefits and risks of these preservation attempts, including concerns about the long-term effects of an official cultural paradigm that authenticates the past and largely discredits the present.

Whereas chapter 2 complicates understandings of the "there and then" (pre-1950 Tibet) and of refugee efforts to preserve and/or re-create traditional Tibetan life in exile, chapter 3 is concerned with Tibetan refugee life

in the "here and now" of contemporary India. In particular, I examine the place of Hindi film songs in Dharamsala's soundscape and the concerns their popularity among Tibetans has raised within a community dealing with volatile inter-ethnic relations and a fear of assimilation.

Tibetan refugee dreams of political independence or autonomy for the homeland are presented and analyzed in chapter 4 through a discussion of the often idealized romance with the "West" engaged in by young Tibetan refugees facing limited opportunities in their South Asian settlements. I argue that, as a style and as an ideology, Western rock-and-roll music is a powerful resource for young Tibetan refugees trying to imagine and pursue personal and political *rangzen* (independence) and seeking ways of being "modern" without deviating from the conservative core values of their community. Participating in an international pop culture is, I argue, a way for these refugees to express a solidarity with a wider human struggle through sounds that have a historical relationship with social change.

Chapter 5 describes how "modern Tibetan music," a new rock-influenced genre that has developed over the past ten years, fits into Dharamsala's soundscape. The story behind modern Tibetan music is largely a story about the social and artistic challenges young Tibetan refugee musicians face in their efforts to convince their community-in-exile that there is room for a new kind of music alongside, or even within, the politically charged concept of cultural preservation that presides in the Tibetan diaspora. As the emergence of modern Tibetan music has not been documented before, I narrate the brief but important history of this genre, focusing on the role of one particular songwriter/guitarist (Tsering Paljor Phupatsang) in its development and on the experiences of a rock group called the Yak Band, which "Paljor" eventually joined in Dharamsala.

Most of this book is devoted to discussions of how the musical sounds resonating in Dharamsala contribute to the making of Tibetan refugee identity, community, and culture. However, such an analysis would be incomplete without a discussion of the role song *lyrics* play in these processes. Chapter 6 is concerned, therefore, with what the lyrics of modern Tibetan songs communicate to Tibetan audiences and, further, *how* they communicate. I argue that as sacred sounds that index the holiness of the Tibetan language, as secular sounds associated with the political and cultural struggles of the community, as carriers of meaningful semantic information, and as reflections of the social forces that in part produced them, the lyrics of modern Tibetan songs contribute significantly and diversely to the ways Tibetan audiences listen to this music.

Finally, chapter 7 focuses on public music concerts, new phenomena in Dharamsala and elsewhere in the Tibetan diaspora that bring all the sounds discussed in this book together in a single place and time. By juxtaposing Hindi, English, Nepali, and Tibetan songs, these concerts are profoundly revealing cultural performances in which many of the social dynamics and communitywide challenges raised throughout this book are enacted. Rock concerts provide a new and controversial venue where refugees can express their appreciation for Tibetan *and* non-Tibetan musics, revealing a level of comfort with cultural ambiguity and a passion for foreign cultures that is worrisome to some in the community. While my observations are informed by all the concerts I attended and participated in during my year living with Tibetans in India, this last chapter primarily depends upon the experiences of Dharamsala's popular yet troubled Yak Band, including my own perspectives as the band's keyboard player.

In the book's brief conclusion, I reiterate that the fundamental belief of Tibetans in cyclicity and in its premise, impermanence, significantly shapes and orders their experiences as refugees. It is for this reason that I chose the trope of echoes to link the idea of cyclicity to the book's focus on music. Various genres of music echo off one another in the daily lives of Tibetan refugees, as do ideas, habits, and languages. These reverberations are not faithful to their sources, however, with each projection shaping and being shaped by its echo. This book supports its claim by showing that the ways different musics resonate with and against one another for Tibetan refugees reveal both subtle and remarkable changes that have generated tensions and ambiguities in the community-in-exile, despite its desire for clear boundaries. Striving for emplacement, cultural preservation, and ethnic purity, these refugees are unwittingly challenging attempts in academic and public policy to normalize expectations about how the conditions of marginality and multiculturalism will be experienced in today's world.