

Popular music, culture and politics

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Popular Music, Culture and Politics Popular Music, Culture and Politics The article chosen for critical analysis is d “ Japanese Popular Music: Culture, Authenticity, and Power” authored by David Morris. Published in 2009 in the third issue of the Journal of Popular Music Studies, this article focuses on reviewing a book bearing a similar title. Morris’s article begins by denoting the explorative nature of Japanese music, associated business practices in modern Japan, advancement of media technology in the country, as well as, the significant role played by English in pop lyrics of Japanese music.

In further evaluation of the book, the article’s author evaluates the concept of internal regionalism within a global context. This shows how some isolated or marginal areas within Japan are capable of upholding authentic Japanese culture, characterized by composition of musical lyrics in Japanese. There is further emphasis on the fact that urban areas of Japan, unlike the isolated ones, are connected to and even compromised by Western influence, coupled with Japan’s troubled history. The association of Japanese popular music with the West is evident throughout the article, forming its greatest theme. For instance, Morris takes note of the fact that the country’s musical culture hence national identity is largely tied up with its 19th century occupation by Western Allied forces. It was as a result of the occupation that Japanese musicians were forced to embrace western styles of music composition and performance, in order to keep Allied soldiers entertained hence surviving the occupation. The author is keen to note that, since that time, music primarily reflects the country’s cultural placement hence national identity in connection and contrast to the West.

The systematic review approach adopted by Morris adequately demonstrates

that Japanese popular music adopts practices that allow it to capitalize on emerging trends. These include not just utilization of English in composition and performance, but also adoption of emergent trends such as those in media technology. This approach is, however, too broad to fully examine and effectively facilitate understanding of Japan's national identity, as shaped by music and its resulting culture. There is extra focus on the nature of music, as influenced by the relationship between Japan and the West, especially the U. S., thus overlooking crucial cultural elements within the country. Other examples of broad or non-specific music associations with national identity include the association of rock and roll music with British identity, an aspect that fails to account for other forms of music that shape a society's uniqueness like church, folk, and even pop music.

Therefore, the article highlights generalizations and broader assertions of cultural influences on national identity, without pointing out specific details of this crucial subject. There is also little explanation of the underlying music practices and their enduring role in moulding national identity. This is because the article primarily addresses the influence of English in Japanese music and cultural environment, overlooking factors such as the extent to which various Japanese populations identify with the music. Overall, even though the article provides broad information on Japanese music culture, it is enlightening since it gives insight into how music can shape a community and even entire country's sense of identity. The credibility of the article could have been improved through use of experimental data on demographic responses of Japanese people to popular culture.

Bibliography

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Morris, D. 2009. Japanese Popular Music: Culture, Authenticity, and Power. *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, 21(3), pp. 320-324.