

cultivated musical tastes or to understand English lyrics. It may also be the case that *pop anak-anak*, a major musical genre in Indonesia, benefits from the fact that it lacks a real equivalent in the Western pop universe.

Table 2. Inventory of Cassette Categories at Aquarius Musik, Main Room

Shelf Label	Contents	Shelf Units
Classic	Western classical and light classical music.	1
Instrumental	Western New Age and instrumental pop.	1
Soundtrack	Recent Hollywood film soundtracks.	1
Compilation	Collections of pop hits, mostly love songs.	2
Jazz	Jazz-pop fusion, some traditional jazz.	2
Alternative/Modern Rock	Western rock bands sharing a rhetorically anti-mainstream, punk-influenced aesthetic.	2
Rhythm + Blues [sic]	American R&B and hip hop.	2
Dance	Various Western electronic dance genres: house, techno, etc.	1
Rock + Pop	Western rock and pop artists.	17
New Releases	Recent titles, both Indonesian and foreign.	1.5
Top 40	Ranked best-selling albums, both Indonesian and foreign.	2
Children	Indonesian <i>pop anak-anak</i> (children's pop)	1

The remainder of the Indonesian music cassettes sold by Aquarius are located in a room to the far left of the store's front entrance. Its total inventory is a fraction of that in the large room (10 versus 33.5 shelf units), and the five categories that appear on shelf labels do not reflect the same level of genre specificity, as the table below illustrates. See Table 3, below.

In the large room near the entrance to the small one, two shelf units were devoted to displaying the store's forty top-selling cassettes of the week, both Indonesian and Western. This was one of the few sections of the store where imported and domestic music shared shelf space and seemed to compete with one another on equal footing. The following table is a list of the Top Forty best-selling albums for the week of January 22, 2000, as compiled by the Aquarius store. See Table 4, below.

Table 3. Inventory of Cassette Categories at Aquarius Musik, Indonesian Room

Shelf Label	Contents	Shelf Units
Compilation	Various artists, mostly collections of vintage Indonesian pop songs.	0.5
Indonesia	Contemporary Indonesian pop, Indonesian rock, alternative, R&B, metal, and so forth.	5
<i>Dangdut</i>	<i>Dangdut</i> , <i>dangdut trendy</i> (hybrids of <i>dangdut</i> and electronic dance music), <i>orkes Melayu</i> (<i>dangdut</i> 's historical precursor).	1
Ethnic [sic]	Primarily pop <i>daerah</i> (regional pop) from different parts of the archipelago, incl. Java, Sunda, Maluku, Sumatra (Malay, Batak, and Minangkabau), North Sulawesi (Manado), Irian Jaya—even East Timor. Also a fair amount of Javanese and Sundanese traditional musics.	1
Unlabeled	Indonesian jazz, jazz-pop fusion, and ethnic fusion jazz; patriotic songs; <i>keroncong</i> ; Indonesian house music; "nostalgia" collections.	1
Rohani	Western and Indonesian pop music with Christian religious themes. ¹⁶	1
Unlabeled subsection	Indonesian Islamic pop	0.5

¹⁶ Protestant Christian-themed popular music constitutes an alternate musical universe in Indonesia that encompasses styles as diverse as light pop, heavy metal, even *dangdut*. *Pop Rohani* recordings can be found in Jakarta's ordinary record shops as well as in a few specialized department stores targeting affluent members of Indonesia's Christian minority which sell all manner of Christian-themed products, including books, clothes, and wall hangings, in addition to cassettes and compact disks. A study of these establishments and the consumers who frequent them would be a valuable addition to our understanding of the growing role of Protestant Christianity in post-New Order Indonesia.

Table 4. Top Forty Best-selling Albums at the Aquarius Musik Store, Week of January 22, 2000
 Indonesian titles are marked with an asterisk (*)

No.	Artist	Album Title	Description
1	The Corrs	<i>MTV Unplugged</i>	Western, quasi-Celtic pop
2	Celine Dion	<i>All the Way: A Decade of Song</i>	Western sentimental pop ballads
3	Westlife	Self-titled	Western "boy band"
4*	Rossa	<i>Tegar [Resolute]</i>	Pop kelas atas (upper-class pop)
5*	Chrissy	<i>Badai Pasti Berlalu [The Storm Will Surely Pass]</i>	Newly arranged songs from a classic 1970s pop album
6*	Various	<i>Hard Rock FM Indonesia Klasik</i>	Compilation of Indonesian rock bands
7*	Padi	<i>Lain Dunia [Another World]</i>	Pop alternatif
8*	Dewa 19	<i>Best of Dewa 19</i>	Pop alternatif
9	Boyzone	<i>By Request</i>	Western "boy band"
10*	Melly	Self-titled	Pop alternatif
11	Bryan Adams	<i>The Best of Me</i>	Western mainstream rock
12	Various	<i>Everlasting Love Songs 2</i>	Western sentimental pop ballads
13*	Sheila on 7	Self-titled	Pop alternatif
14	Metallica	<i>S&M 2</i>	Western hard rock/metal
15*	Bunglon	<i>Biru [Blue]</i>	Smooth jazz-influenced pop
16	Sheila Majid	<i>Kumohon [I Beseech]</i>	Malaysian jazz-influenced pop
17	Alanis Morissette	<i>Unplugged</i>	Western alternative rock
18	Richard Clayderman	<i>Chinese Garden</i>	Western pop classical crossover
19	Korn	<i>Issues</i>	Western "hip metal" (hip hop + metal)
20	Various	<i>'99: The Hits</i>	Western Top 40 compilation
21	Rage Against the Machine	<i>The Battle of Los Angeles</i>	Western "new school" hardcore/hip metal
22*	Sherina	<i>Andai Aku Besar Nanti [When I Grow Up]</i>	Children's pop (<i>pop anak-anak</i>)
23	Various	<i>Forever</i>	Western sentimental pop ballads
24*	Dian Pramana Poetra	<i>Terbaik [Best]</i>	"Upper-class" pop

25*	Syahrani	<i>Tersiksa Lagi [Suffering Again]</i>	Vocal jazz
26	Savage Garden	<i>Affirmation</i>	Western mainstream pop
27	George Michael	<i>Songs from the Last Century</i>	Western mainstream pop
28	Metallica	<i>S & M 1</i>	Western hard rock/metal
29	Santana	<i>Supernatural</i>	Western Latin-crossover pop rock
30*	Rita-Sita-Dewi	<i>Satu [One]</i>	Upper class pop
31*	Romeo	<i>Self-Titled</i>	Upper class pop
32*	Ruth Sahanaya	<i>Kasih [Love]</i>	Upper class pop
33	Various	<i>L is for Love</i>	Western sentimental love ballads
34	Foo Fighters	<i>There Is Nothing Left to Lose</i>	Western alternative rock
35	Eric Clapton	<i>Chronicles</i>	Western mainstream rock
36*	Purpose	<i>Tiger Clan</i>	Ska
37	Various	<i>The End Of Days</i>	Hollywood movie soundtrack
38	Guns 'n' Roses	<i>Live Era '87-93</i>	Western hard rock
39	Various	<i>American Pie</i>	Hollywood movie soundtrack
40*	Noin Bullet	<i>Bebas [Free]</i>	Ska

This list is fairly representative: the ratio of Indonesian to foreign entries is 2:3 (16 to 24; on other weeks the balance was tipped more favorably toward the former), and it is dominated by musical genres commonly associated with middle-class consumers: Western pop, sophisticated “upper-class” Indonesian pop, and Western hard rock music.¹⁷ I never saw a *dangdut* cassette included in the Aquarius Top Forty. While in the above table Western recording artists occupy the top three slots, on other weeks Indonesian recordings held those positions. Overall, the Top Forty lists demonstrated an incompatibility between the levels of attention enjoyed by imported and Indonesian music within the frame of the Aquarius store. While imported music attracted many buyers, Indonesian music also sold well despite its spatial marginalization and the middle-class, *gengsi*-conscious character of the store’s regular clientele.

Mobile Cassette Vendors

A final type of commercial music retailer is worth mentioning here. Along with a veritable army of other mobile salesmen who traveled through my neighborhood in South Jakarta selling everything from brooms to hot *sate ayam* (chicken satay), a mobile cassette vendor would make his way through the streets pushing a wooden cart into

¹⁷ The list also indicates the preference among many Indonesian consumers for greatest-hits compilations (eleven in total, seventeen if one counts albums containing “live” recordings or new studio arrangements of familiar songs) over albums of new, unfamiliar material.

which a car stereo system was installed. The cassettes he sold, all legitimate copies, not pirated, were intended to appeal to the servants and *warung* proprietors of the neighborhood, not its more affluent residents. Not surprisingly, the selection of recordings was dominated by *dangdut* and regional music from Sunda, Central Java, and East Java, including cassettes of village folk genres such as Sundanese *kliningan* that were difficult to find in Jakarta cassette stores.

In addition to cassettes, the "circling around *dangdut*" (*dangdut keliling-keliling*) vendor sold toys, brushes, and other household items. His approach was signaled by the *dangdut* music blaring out of the cart's speakers as he walked down the street. The tape deck installed in the cart was also used to try out cassettes for potential customers. While Western music was not wholly absent from his wares, the circling-around-*dangdut* seller seemed to circumvent Jakarta's prestige hierarchy of genres by unabashedly targeting rural migrants, not city people, as his primary customers.

Cassette Piracy and Vendors of Illegally Copied Cassettes

No inventory of the sites of music commerce in Indonesia would be complete without some remarks on cassette piracy. With most legitimate Indonesian cassettes costing over Rp. 12,000 each, it is hardly surprising that vendors of illegally copied versions priced at Rp. 6,000 or less can attract many buyers. The quality of these pirated versions varies, but they are often not markedly inferior to the originals. Color copiers have enabled pirates to reproduce accurately the original graphics of legitimate releases, and high-quality cassette duplication machines can approximate the original's sound quality. In addition to selling illegal copies of complete albums, pirated cassette vendors sell unauthorized compilations of current hit songs. These are usually either *dangdut* or *pop* compilations, and their graphics, usually a collage of miniaturized cassette covers representing the different songs, vary widely in sophistication. One advantage the pirated compilations have over legitimate hits collections is that they can combine songs released by different recording companies, since they are not bound by copyright restrictions. Thus, pirated hits compilations are not only cheaper, but also more likely to contain all the current hit songs.

Surprisingly, not all Indonesian musicians whom I interviewed vehemently opposed piracy. After all, if one's work was pirated, it indicated persuasively that one's music had achieved a measure of mass acceptance and that consumer demand existed for it. During an interview, Harry Roesli, one of Indonesia's foremost composers/musicians/social critics, proudly showed me a pirated hit song compilation that contained his controversial composition "*Si Cantik*" ("Ms. Beautiful," a satirical song about a granddaughter of then-President Suharto who was suspected of selling the drug Ecstasy) as the first track. He considered the cassette proof that the subversive political messages contained in his music were successfully reaching the masses of ordinary people. Many underground scene members claimed that the mainstream acceptance of Indonesian underground music was proven by the fact that some extreme metal bands' cassettes (usually those released by major labels) had been pirated and were being sold in outdoor markets alongside the customary rock, pop, and *dangdut* offerings.

Buyers of pirated cassettes were categorically assumed to be members of the working class by my consultants. Members of the middle class were purportedly too concerned with status (*gengsi*) to consider purchasing such items, which were thought to be of inferior quality. The poor, on the other hand, were said to have the attitude of *asal denger aja* (as long as you can hear) and to have no qualms about the uneven quality of illegally copied cassettes. Pirated cassettes thus occupy the lowest prestige level among recorded musical artifacts. They are sources of popular pleasure, but, unlike legitimate commercial cassettes, do not act as indices of cultural capital even if they happen to be illegal copies of Western music.

Sources for Underground Music and Accessories

In an interview posted on an Indonesian fanzine Web site, Robin Malau, a veteran musician in the Bandung underground scene, comments:

[K]ebanyakan cara indie jualan, sampe-sampe ngga berasa bahwa mereka itu sedang melakukan transaksi dagang . . . antar teman, promosi mulut ke mulut . . . seperti untuk kalangan sendiri gitu . . . bagus lho . . . positifnya, itu juga salah satu cara approach yang lebih akrab kepada pasar, lagian mo begimana lagi?

For the most part the *indie* way of selling is such that it is not felt that they are making a commercial transaction . . . between friends, word-of-mouth promotion . . . like for their own social circle, y'know? . . . it's nice . . . the positive thing is that it's also one kind of *approach* to the market that is friendlier—why would you want anything more?¹⁸

In keeping with the point of view quoted above, underground cassettes are, as a rule, not found in mall stores, cassette stalls, or any other conventional retail outlet. It is, in fact, illegal to sell them, as the Indonesian government does not collect any tax on the transaction.¹⁹ Legitimate (non-pirated) commercially released cassettes in Indonesia usually come with a small strip of paper indicating that the manufacturer has prepaid a percentage of their value to the government. In order to purchase underground music cassettes that lack these required strips of paper, one must know someone in the underground scene, attend a concert event, or travel to one of a small number of urban specialty shops which sell underground music and accessories.

Most underground concert events include itinerant vendors who set up shop on a blanket either inside or on the grounds outside the concert venue. Their wares vary, and can include t-shirts, stickers, cassettes, compact disks, fanzines, and sewn-on patches. Significantly, this is one place where imported and indigenously produced

¹⁸ Interview with Robin Malau posted on Puppen's official Web site, www.not-a-pup.com/multi.htm, ellipses in the original.

¹⁹ A notable exception is Robin's band Puppen, the members of which decided to pay the value-added tax required by law in order to sell their album in mainstream retail outlets like Aquarius. Puppen was one of the few underground bands to take this bold and costly step, which proved to be a wise investment: during one week in May 2000, Puppen's latest cassette release was ranked at number 38 in the Aquarius store's Top Forty, outselling the most recent album by Sting.

recordings are generally sold side-by-side; the peddler's wares are not usually separated by their country of origin but rather mixed together, arranged alphabetically or in no particular order at all. Only an insider to the music scene would be able to distinguish foreign groups' cassettes from Indonesians', since most local band names are in English and their album graphics make use of similar genre-based iconography. Of course, the sharp difference in cassette price persists, although stickers and other accessories sporting Western band logos are usually pirated and thus do not cost more than those with Indonesian band logos, which are sometimes also unauthorized copies.



Cassettes and compact disks for sale at an underground concert event in Pancoran, South Jakarta.

Photo by J. Wallach.

Reverse Outfits

The oldest standing retail establishment for the sale of underground music and accessories is located not in Jakarta but in a quiet residential neighborhood in the West Javanese capital city of Bandung. Since June 1993, Reverse Outfits has sold both imported and Indonesian underground music. The store is located on the property of Richard Mutter, an *Indo* (part native, part European) in his early thirties. Richard is the

former drummer of Pas (Precise), an alternative rock group that originated in the underground scene and released a cassette on a small independent label in 1994, but has since released four albums for the large national recording company Aquarius Musikindo and met with modest commercial success. The Reverse Outlets store is part of a complex that includes a rehearsal/recording studio for Richard's record label, 40.1.24 (named after the neighborhood's postal code), and computer facilities for creating posters and graphics. Originally a source primarily for imported underground music, which the store purchased via mail order, the inventory of Reverse Outfits shifted dramatically between 1997 and 2000 as a result of two factors.

First, the economic crisis and the steep devaluation of the rupiah made imported cassettes and compact disks prohibitively expensive, as the store not only had to pay full price for each item in a foreign currency (most often US dollars), but also cover substantial overseas shipping and handling costs. Thus the amount of imported music on sale at Reverse Outfits declined considerably after 1998. However, this lost inventory was replaced by way of a second development: the exponential increase of independently produced Indonesian underground music recordings over the same period.

Like Aquarius, Reverse Outfits is divided into two rooms. During my first visit to the store in the fall of 1997, the inner room was used to display recordings from overseas, while the outer room contained a glass display counter, similar to those found in *warung kaset*, filled with domestically produced underground music. While imported underground music was usually sold in the form of compact disks, Indonesian underground music, like most music recorded in Indonesia, was only available on cassette. As of September 2000, only one underground label had ever released a compact disk: a band compilation 40.1.24 Records produced in 1997 that could still be purchased at Reverse Outfits three years later. The economic crisis prevented any subsequent compact disk releases, but the number of new cassettes continued to grow. By the time of my return to Indonesia in 1999, Reverse Outfits had consolidated its musical inventory. Its few remaining imported compact disks were placed on the top two shelves in the front room's glass display case, while Indonesian underground cassettes were displayed in no particular order on the bottom shelf. Thus, even in this context the hierarchical spatial separation between foreign and indigenous music was maintained.

In addition to Reverse Outfits, a small but growing number of underground boutiques (*toko underground*) had opened in Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Denpasar, and other cities by 2000. These establishments are often owned and operated by veteran underground scene members (often those who have graduated or dropped out of university and are in need of earning their livelihoods) and sometimes include rehearsal and recording studios as well. Studio Inferno in Surabaya even has its own Internet café. These outlets, like Reverse Outfits, sell both foreign and Indonesian shirts, stickers, hats, fanzines, and recordings and are important hangout spots (*tempat nongkrong*) for members of the scene. Many stores, such as the creatively named Ish-Kabile Sick Freak Outfits Shop in Jakarta, produce their own T-shirts and

stickers.²⁰ Underground boutiques exist in a gray area between the Indonesian formal and informal economic sectors, and while they depend on impersonal, commercial transactions to some extent for survival, they adhere to the underground's ethic of grassroots authenticity and anti-commercial artistic purism. For example, while Reverse Outfits stocks Pas's major label cassette releases, all other titles they sell are releases from small independent labels. The other boutiques I visited did not sell any "major label" Indonesian cassettes at all, even those released by groups formerly part of the underground scene.

Conclusions: Recorded Music, Display, and Musical Value

Cassettes stores in Indonesia display hegemonic and xenocentric understandings of musical genres that ghettoize and subordinate indigenously produced music to international music products and maintain a segregated, unequal relationship between them. The two partial exceptions to this rule mentioned in this essay, Christian (*Rohani*) music and underground music, are notable for their connection to self-conscious minority subcultures organized around the interpretation of cultural texts and forms produced outside of Indonesia. The presentational logic that relegates musically similar Indonesian and Western recordings to separate areas of the store preserves the myth that these musics are incomparable despite their sonic similarity. In the larger stores dominated by Western imports, this logic deceptively suggests that Indonesian-produced popular music is enjoyed by a minority of Indonesia's consumers, despite sales figures that consistently demonstrate otherwise. While perhaps preserving a sense of Indonesian cultural uniqueness, this separation can also present Indonesian popular music as second-class and less worthy of serious attention.

In addition to the lack of differentiation between Indonesian pop genres in most Indonesian music stores, "regional" or "ethnic" music is also a catchall category under which the most traditional and the most contemporary styles are displayed side by side. The regional category is thus even less differentiated than the Indonesian national music category, which is always at the very least divided between pop and *dangdut*. *Dangdut*, the most popular style in Indonesia, is usually marginalized in store displays. Conversely, Western music, a minority taste, is highlighted and carefully categorized by subgenre. An alternate display strategy of placing Western and Indonesian rock, for example, in one shelf category sorted alphabetically by artist with no regard to country of origin still seems unthinkable in mainstream outlets and even in many underground music stores—though the boundaries between foreign and indigenously produced music have clearly eroded somewhat in the underground scene. I would suggest that one reason for this is that Western and Indonesian musics are perceived as existing on different ontological as well as economic planes.

²⁰ According to Robin Hutagaol, the store's proprietor, the name is a pun on "ishkabibble," an obscure Yiddish-American colloquialism he encountered once in a dictionary of American slang. In addition to running Ish-Kabible, Robin plays drums and sings with the underground band Brain the Machine, which describes its music as "industrial hardcore progressive."

Reasons underlying the incommensurable categorical differences between Indonesian and Western music are summed up by the term *gengsi*, status consciousness. Indonesian popular music, no matter how Westernized, is considered of lesser status than “international” Anglo-American music. Indonesian music requires less cultivation (*apresiasi*) to enjoy and is therefore more accessible to non-elites. According to the widespread xenocentric view of musical value in Indonesia, the musics of the village are *kampung*, repellently backward and low-class, while even higher status Indonesian pop still cannot aspire to the greatness of international pop, and moreover is forever subject to the accusation of simply imitating Western originals.

Despite the apparent investment made by music retailers in keeping Indonesian and foreign music separate and unequal, it is important to emphasize that the categorical and presentational logics of Indonesian record stores discussed in this essay contrast sharply with those of most Indonesian consumers. In general, Indonesians do not strictly segregate their recorded music collections into Western and Indonesian categories, and they use more differentiated genre labels to describe Indonesian popular music than appear on record store shelves. For example, Indonesian teenagers regularly use labels such as *rock*, *underground*, *rap*, *ska*, *metal*, and *erenbi* (R&B) when discussing the particular musical styles of Indonesian recording artists. Nevertheless, I found that the discursive divide between Indonesian and foreign was very much present in statements young people made about the value of different popular musics, as was the suspicion that Indonesian versions of Western genres were derivative and inferior. Thus the Indonesian music fan is suspended between doubts about the authenticity of Westernized pop music and misgivings about the village backwardness of musics regarded as authentically Indonesian. This state of ambivalent suspension leads to many creative attempts at solutions, and the younger generation’s quest for an authentically Indonesian modern music continues.

Trivial and ephemeral though its products may be, popular music provides the heartbeat for all modern societies and can reveal much about the cultural dynamics and deep contradictions of contemporary national cultures. In Indonesia a central tension exists between the longing for a solidary, egalitarian national community on one hand and for modernity, affluence, identity, and consumerist lifestyle—for *social distinction*—on the other. The energy exerted in the denunciation of *dangdut* music is a salient example of how some Indonesians aspire to modernity by denigrating a cultural form that is perceived as antithetical to this aspiration. Indonesia is often rightfully celebrated for its “unity in diversity” style of nationalism and for the chaotic but relatively peaceful co-existence of cultural alternatives that seems to define everyday social existence in the country, particularly in urban areas after the collapse of the New Order. This diversity is certainly exemplified by the sheer variety of popular music genres for sale in Indonesian cities, but what is too often overlooked is that this exuberant and dizzying array of simultaneous cultural alternatives is not immune from the hierarchical imperatives of modernization nor the neocolonial attitudes of national elites. Indeed, the regime of cultural value that drives contemporary Indonesians’ quest for social distinction in the realm of music consumption is often based, sadly, on precisely those xenocentric attitudes that Third World nationalisms had once attempted to eradicate.