Educate, Inspire, Change: A Musical Ethnography of World Camp, Inc

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EDUCATE, INSPIRE, CHANGE:
A MUSICAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF WORLD CAMP, INC.

by IAN R. COPELAND
HONORS THESIS in THIRD WORLD STUDIES
OBERLIN COLLEGE ~ 2011
Figure 0.1 – Field Staff member Chikabachi Daire during Morning Games. (photo by Karen Clark)
Acknowledgements

With sincere gratitude I offer thanks . . .

. . . to Katherine Mezel for her fearlessness in taking on this project and relentless patience in seeing it through to completion.

. . . to Jennifer Fraser for her mentorship—past, present, and future.

. . . to Baker Henson and Jesse Pipes for their openness to an amorphous proposition and the equally amorphous job description that came with it.

. . . to Peter Gusto and Promise Kamanga for their communicative prowess and good-natured tolerance of my own linguistic blunders.

. . . to Katy Lackey, Jaren Folden, Rachel Dudasik, and Karen Clark—among many others—for their cooperation and camaraderie.

. . . to the Oberlin Conservatory Honors and Awards Committee and the Presser Foundation for their institutional and financial support.

. . . to Marc Blecher and the Committee on Third World Studies for erecting a concise and feasible process where none before existed.

. . . and to my family and friends for their unerring support.

Zikomo!
April 25, 2011
Figure 0.2 – Volunteers and students join hands during Morning Songs. (photo by Karen Clark)

Figure 0.3 – Students observe a presentation. (photo by Mollie Hunter)

Figure 0.4 – Students perform a presentation. (photo by Sara Jane Fogarty)
Abstract

Blighted by nation-wide HIV and deforestation crises, the nation of Malawi plays host to scores of international Non-Governmental Organizations every year. This project focuses on one such organization, World Camp Incorporated, and its use of musical strategies in the implementation of educational outreach programs in rural primary school classrooms. Throughout a four-day curriculum, music is called upon to energize students, galvanize classroom unity, convey curricular concepts, and represent medical information to host communities.

Much has been written about music’s affective and effective power as demonstrated through local community-based organizations, but this ethnographic project resituates music as a tool for social change in the cross-cultural context of international aid. Through the historical and political contextualization of World Camp’s presence in host communities, I suggest that volunteers’ dominant cultural status enables them pedagogical latitude in the classroom and a unique discursive space where horizontal, symmetrical relationships with their students are possible. Through songs and dances each morning, volunteers seek to foster social cohesion with their students, an encounter to which I apply Thomas Turino’s semiotic theory as an analytical metric. In community gatherings at the conclusion of each “camp,” classes of students utilize music and drama to re-present messages about HIV and other social challenges faced by Malawians. The resulting hybridized musical genre often wed Malawian folk music idioms to medical and behavioral concepts from World Camp’s curriculum. Drawing on the work of performance theorists, I assess the degree to which these performances both celebrate and subvert rural societal structures amid students’ efforts to combat local social problems.
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Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa is beset by a myriad of problems. Owing in large part to the anguished legacy of nineteenth and twentieth century European colonialism and exacerbated by the onslaught of HIV/AIDS, the pressing issues facing the region are manifest: nascent governments; lack of infrastructure; public health crises; economies mired in national debt. These factors have inspired hundreds of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)—a term appropriated for any group in the region filling the gap between the spheres of government and market—to embark on a heterogeneous campaign to establish civil society, deliver humanitarian aid, and constitute representative bodies in the eyes of the state. Ranging in scale and scope from neighborhood associations to the Clinton Global Initiative, NGOs’ shared conviction to “do good” is often implemented through the incorporation of community-based and/or nationally-held cultural touchstones including art, dance, history, folklore, and—most conspicuously—music.

This study examines the use of music by one such organization, World Camp, Incorporated, of Asheville, North Carolina, as evidenced in World Camp’s educational outreach initiatives in the rural districts surrounding Lilongwe, Malawi. A nation of approximately 12 million, Malawi is nestled along the Great Rift Valley, sharing borders with Tanzania to the north, Zambia to the west, and Mozambique to the south and east. As a small, landlocked nation with the world’s highest national debt, an HIV positive
rate of eleven percent, and a raging deforestation crisis, Malawi is a veritable magnet for NGOs and hosts scores of them each year. Since 2001, World Camp has operated educational outreach initiatives in partnership with local primary schools, teaching from a curriculum that focuses—among other issues—on HIV/AIDS, the environment, and gender empowerment. To teach this curriculum World Camp recruits college-aged young adults, primarily from the United States and Canada, to spend five weeks living in the World Camp house in Lilongwe and teaching six days a week in the surrounding rural areas. “Volunteers”—as World Camp teachers are termed—undergo a multivalent application process, fundraise a program fee of several thousand U.S. dollars, and, once they arrive in Malawi, are expected to spend nearly all of their overall time devoted to preparing for and executing classroom lessons.

Throughout the curriculum from which World Camp volunteers teach are strategically sprinkled instances of music-making—instances that are at the core of the summaries and analyses that constitute this paper. Over the course of World Camp’s four-day residency at a given school, strategies rooted in music and dance are repeatedly drawn upon to foster relationships between volunteers and their students; galvanize pride and cohesion at the classroom, school, and community level; and convey and reinforce curricular concepts from the classroom curriculum to the community at large. On their face, many of these strategies function not unlike the summer camp and talent show tropes upon which they are in part based—they rarely (although sometimes) feature technical or compositional virtuosity, many are largely taught and performed in short order and quickly pass from the scene in preference for some new aspect of the curriculum, and never are depictions or representations of these strategies a prominent feature of World Camp’s recruitment apparatus. But when World Camp’s musical strategies are considered in the deeper context of the
organization’s overarching mission, both their effective role—their denotative or structural purpose—and affective role—their inspirational and transformational potential—are set in stark relief against the broader sociological project underway.

Much has been written about music’s power and utility in combating issues that fundamentally challenge communities and their members, and several ethnomusicologists and other researchers have written and theorized thoughtfully about musical efforts endeavored by local and grassroots organizations (see Barz 2006, Bouragult 2003, Van Buren 2006). This ethnographic project resituates music as a tool for social change in the cross-cultural context of international aid, an arena that boasts few success stories amid far more cautionary tales. Like many college students who share my education and politics I remain deeply ambivalent about cross-cultural interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly ones that I can quickly categorize as either neoliberal economically or evangelical religiously. But like many in that same cohort, I openly acknowledge blatant examples of geopolitical tyranny and injustice around the world and feel idealistically compelled to reasonably do what I can to slow or reverse their effects. It is in the context of just such ambivalence that I present this study: World Camp—more often than the jaded skeptic in me would sometimes like to admit—gets it “right,” but so too does it periodically fall short, stand idly, and miss the mark entirely. Viewed through the straightforward prism of well-meaning volunteers giving their time and energy to a cause greater than themselves, World Camp’s mission strikes an observer as overly simplistic or tone-deaf to cultural nuance. All the same, I am hesitant to discard World Camp’s presence as feckless cultural tourism serving only to buttress volunteers’ resumes. What good World Camp does bring about, I argue in this study, is—in fact—World Camp’s doing: social change in the World Camp model—when and if it does appear—is the end product of a highly intentional series of
individual and collective actions. In a second and parallel argument, I suggest that—though at times problematic—the deployment of musical strategies is essential to World Camp’s bringing about of this “good.”

Locations: the Organization, the Researcher, and the Field

In late 2000, a group of college students filed papers to found World Camp Inc. following their travels throughout Southern Africa as both participants on study abroad programs and as thrill-seeking backpackers. Impressed by the specific pedagogical tactics on display in a youth center in Durban, South Africa, and inspired to address in deeper measure the societal challenges they witnessed throughout their travels, they enjoined friends and family to financially and logistically support their emergent idea for an international education outfit. Not yet college graduates, they operated the World Camp “office” out of a spare dorm room and returned the following summer where—in twenty-one schools based in several countries—they means-tested a curriculum modeled after guidelines provided by the United Nations, UNICEF, and others and imbued with their own creative flair. The subsequent summer they focused their energies exclusively on Malawi, pitching tents on a municipal golf course by night and visiting schools in a rented Land Rover by day. A few years later and with a steady flow of volunteers, World Camp put a down payment on a large house in Lilongwe in 2004 from where it still bases operations and initiatives in Malawi.

World Camp is governed by a Board of Directors, the President of which, Baker Henson, is an original co-founder and remains an active voice in the day-to-day operations of the organization. World Camp’s United States office, based for the past few years in Asheville, North Carolina, modestly employs two full-time staff. Malawi Program sessions—one conducted in January and two each summer—are staffed by
program coordinators, a role initially performed by those from the founders’ “generation” but now increasingly filled by returning volunteers for a small stipend. Local Field Staff members—usually comparable in age to volunteers—are seasonally hired to translate for each classroom teaching team of two. Over the course of the past ten years, World Camp contends to have reached tens of thousands of students with approximately 250 volunteers completing the program. Though still in their formative stages, Henson—now a medical student—envisions a series of initiatives that would pair medical attention in the form of volunteer doctors with World Camp’s current, education-centered regime (field notes, 9/11/10).

I first got to know both World Camp and Malawi as a volunteer during the January Term of my first year of college. I emerged from the experience deeply moved by the stories I heard and people I met—both fellow volunteers and Malawians—but fascinated above all by the strikingly musical world that enveloped me during my hours at “camp.” Back at Oberlin, I reframed my time in Malawi as not only an exercise in humanitarian goodwill but also a series of musical encounters indivisible from their sociological milieu. Piecing together what photos and videos of music-making I had from my trip, I developed a tentative analysis of music in the World Camp model for an introductory ethnomusicology course that gave way subsequently to a conference paper on the same topic. My “research,” however, was in reality a series of diary entries and photos taken quickly with no formal ethnographic designs. In the summer of 2010 I arranged to return to Malawi with World Camp, this time as a program coordinator—though at the time of my accepting the offer I had only a vague sense of what the role entailed nearly four years after my initial trip.

The findings that constitute this study were collected over a twelve-week period across the months of May, June, July, and August 2010, during which I lived in
Lilongwe and traveled to ten outlying primary schools for periods of four days each. In my role as coordinator, I accompanied volunteers to each school and oversaw the logistics of each camp day—serving lunch was among my least enviable tasks—and at some schools I was called upon to teach the Empowerment curricular sections (see Chapter 1) when the relatively few male volunteers were out-proportioned by high numbers of male students. Traditionally, coordinators—as comparatively more experienced with the camp day and atmosphere than the volunteers they oversee—remain free and available during the camp day in the case of an emergency. Having the good fortune that no major emergencies took place during my tenure, this time spent in rural host communities was mine to conduct research. Even as the schools and communities subjected to it change, the curriculum from which World Camp volunteers teach remains the same from week to week with any large changes coming in the months between sessions.¹ As a result, I learned to time my classroom observations and audio and video recordings to coincide with musical strategies’ deployment as well as with particularly illuminating and efficacious portions of the curriculum.

It should be stated at this juncture that articulated in these pages is not a study of Malawian rural culture per se, nor is it truly a study of African music. Rather it is an ethnographic account and analysis of one organization’s use of music in a historical, political, and social context that happens—very fortunately if my opinion is merited—to take place in rural communities throughout central Malawi. Participant-observation in this context does not mean “going native” or being ceded a patch of grass on which to pitch a tent (see Kisliuk 1998:77), but rather being embedded with an international aid organization as it goes about its daily work in a country with which it has an

¹ One such change came in preparation for the January 2010 session when the curriculum was expanded from three to four days.
amicable—though mostly formal—relationship. While volunteers and coordinators interact regularly with local Malawians who work either at the house or as Field Staff members, they are urban residents of Lilongwe of whom all are one or several generations away from the rural realities endemic to the communities in which World Camp teaches. Notes recorded during my time in the field are as likely to describe an informal conversation among volunteers on the front porch or an argument on the bus to and from camp as they are a church service, initiation ceremony, or some other rural event. Unlike rural-based researchers or even Peace Corps Volunteers stationed within twenty miles of the World Camp house, I had consistent email access, read the New York Times online everyday, and kept in touch with family, friends, and professors in the United States. The effects of this cross-culturally mediated “field” on me were two-fold. First, as a privileged foreigner living in health and comfort I felt a combination of guilt at my undeserved, disproportionate wealth compared with my surroundings and restlessness at not being able to dictate the terms of my own movement around the city and country.² Secondly and as a researcher, I was continuously challenged by the disconcerting familiarity of my environment—as well as by my coordinator-related responsibilities—to stay vigilant and resourceful in my ethnographic duties.

As a result, my methodology for this project consisted largely of three strategies. First, as a participant-observer I fully immersed myself into the daily activities of the organization. Each morning before leaving for camp I helped to pack the bus, every day after getting home I helped wash the lunch coolers, and I participated wholly in all musical episodes ordinarily inclusive of coordinators, and most of those inclusive of coordinators—armed with cell phones—were afforded much more freedom than volunteers: we were exempt from the “buddy” system that governed volunteers’ movements around the city and were the only World Camp personnel permitted to (sparingly) drive the vehicles.

² In point of fact, coordinators—armed with cell phones—were afforded much more freedom than volunteers: we were exempt from the “buddy” system that governed volunteers’ movements around the city and were the only World Camp personnel permitted to (sparingly) drive the vehicles.
volunteers generally. As mentioned above, I regularly taught Empowerment sessions to male students, working to establish the same types of relationships I relished during my 2007 tenure as a volunteer. Secondly, I conducted a series of interviews with various volunteers, Field Staff members, and local Malawian teachers. In the first two instances I worked from a set of pre-written questions though the exchanges often unfolded like the conversations between friends that they were. When speaking with Malawian teachers I often used a Field Staff member as a translator, though at times teachers’ English was proficient enough that it wasn’t necessary and the translator entered the discourse as a participant rather than an interpreter. In these exchanges I stressed my dual roles as coordinator and researcher and the shift in identity from the former to the latter I wished to assume for the interview—in some cases a successful strategy, but more often not. Third, I recorded via audio and video both participatory and presentational performances. In most cases these instances appeared in the curricular context of either Morning Songs, Classroom Songs, or Presentations—the three sections of the curriculum overtly dedicated to music-making. However, I was also cognizant of and prepared for spontaneous performances, diegetic musics, and broader aural soundscapes, all of which contextualize—even if they are explicitly absent from—this study.

Structure and Overview of the Study

This work’s title—“Educate, Inspire, Change”—is an appropriation of World Camp Inc.’s motto. When it comes to this phrase, a quick glance at the World Camp website, a random photo of a volunteer wearing the World Camp T-shirt and khaki pants or skirt that make up the World Camp “uniform,” or a pun overheard between two volunteers all reveal the same thing: the motto is everywhere. In establishing a
motto, Henson did not seek to reinvent the wheel: he developed a catchy and memorable sentiment that crystallizes—with no lack of confidence—the undertaking with which volunteers are tasked. Recited in succession, these three imperatives evoke a teleological relationship: only if first you educate and subsequently inspire can you ultimately hope for change. Such a reading implies that change cannot be realistically expected to take place if it is not first sufficiently buttressed with an education and the inspiration to put said education to good and proper use. As a recruiting technique, the missing link to a would-be volunteer is clear: without the inspiration that I can provide, the education at these students’ fingertips goes unrealized—maybe forever. Regularly, volunteers will playfully lambast the motto, often incorporating it into a drinking game or adding a fourth, surprise element for comedic effect (e.g. Educate. Inspire. Change. Pizza.). Clearly these cheery appropriations get at the stilted, formulaic nature of the motto when perceived by volunteers in a positivistic sense: humorous repackagings of the phrase suggest that there is fodder here for tinkering, possibly giving way to new horizons for epistemological possibilities and analytical inquiries—for the motto, yes, but also for World Camp and its mission.

Drawing on this motto as a tripartite organizational scheme, the three chapters that compose this study each unfolds thematically: the content, theoretical approach, and conclusions inherent in each relate back to a corresponding command from World Camp’s own central theme. Just as “Educate, Inspire, Change” has multifarious functions for World Camp—succinctly-stated objective, all-encompassing mantra, recruiting tactic, quasai-theological zeitgeist, occasional butt of self-effacing humor—so too will its function morph and rematerialize in what follows. The term I have elected to

3 Even still, the motto remains instilled in volunteers long after they leave Malawi: a recent email response from a volunteer to an entreaty about photos for this project was signed—presumably humorlessly—educate, inspire, change.
describe this motto is “archetype,” a nomenclature I have borrowed from composer, musicologist, and philosopher Leonard Meyer. Throughout his prodigious theoretical output, Meyer uses the term to describe musical motifs that remain structurally stable over time though whose differing contents reveal the extent to which composers can prod listeners to abandon—though ultimately return to—pre-formed expectations (Meyer 1999:194). Since in this essay I am hoping for a similar pliancy on the part of the reader—that is, a willingness to at times explore a theoretical motif in an unanticipated direction or at an unexpected pace—I find the language of “archetype” a fitting way to describe how this essay derives its structure.

In Chapter 1 I frame World Camp’s encounter with the members of its host communities in cultural, historical, and curricular terms. For my framework I employ Marie Louise Pratt’s contact zones as a strategy for analyzing the “stuff” of cultural exchange and how it is celebrated, mediated, or refuted. Following this exposition I offer a historical overview of contact zones that—like ethereal, concentric circles on a map—have delineated Malawian cultural and political reality since the first encounters with Europeans. I conclude the chapter with a summary of the World Camp curriculum’s nonmusical constituent parts. Chapters 2 and 3 turn to the musical analysis that forms the core of this study. In Chapter 2 I discuss the first two iterations of music in the World Camp model—Morning Songs and Classroom Songs—as having inspirational value for both volunteers and students. By introducing Thomas Turino’s treatment of Charles Peirce’s semiotic theory, I erect a framework for contending with the associations and resonances volunteers and students have with the music they share. Through musical participation with Malawian children, I suggest that volunteers’ semiotic connections to stereotypes of their students reify mistruths that are themselves perpetuated in World Camp’s promotional strategies. In Chapter 3, I discuss and
analyze a number of selections from end-of-camp Presentations and demonstrate the extent to which they either enshrine or shy away from the transformed discursive relationships made possible in the contact zone. Invoking the work of performance theorists, I point to performative contexts as spaces where Malawian students can posit novel solutions to social problems that can both appropriate and arrest normative societal structures. In the study’s final pages, I return to a discussion I foreshadowed in this introduction: the place of activism in ethnography—specifically in this ethnography—a concept I place in conversation with three disciplinary sub-fields that I term activist ethnomusicologies.

As a postscript, the musical examples cited in-text are included on an accompanying DVD supplement: clip numbers in the text (e.g. clip 1, clip 7) and on the DVD correspond with textual transcriptions and recording information assembled in Appendix B. If you are reading this paper in its .pdf format and have access to the internet, clicking on the in-text hyperlinks as well as the URL addresses in the appendix will reveal an unlisted YouTube channel where the clips are all visible in a slightly lower quality format. Though the numbering of the clips follow the musical arc of a camp—Morning Songs followed by Classroom Songs and finally Presentations—the clips can and at times should be observed and enjoyed out of order and in the absence of a textual guide. While these recordings cannot reproduce with any degree of accuracy the aural richness of a Malawian village, I do find that getting a grasp on clips’ musical cadence and volume extremes can help inculcate a comprehensibility of performance, even as the spoken and sung Chichewa flies by my—and I would assume the reader’s—ears.
Chapter 1

Approaching and Framing a World Camp Education

Though typically lasting four complete school days, much about a World Camp Inc. educational outreach initiative is determined in the opening hours of the group’s first morning at a new school. Each “first day of camp”—as the accepted terminology goes—begins with a flurry of activity at World Camp’s home base in Old Town, Lilongwe: new teaching teams cobble together necessary materials for Day One’s lessons; the Team Leader assembles the parachutes, beach balls, and ropes used in Morning Games; Field Staff members gather on the front porch having walked up the hill from the central bus stand; and all help (theoretically) to load the bus with teaching boxes, lunch coolers, water buckets, and—ultimately—people. The length of a commute to a given school can vary considerably depending on the cogency of the written directions and road conditions, and first days can be particularly finicky as the session’s coordinators—the ostensible leaders of the journey—diffidently parse out landmarks from the passing scenery and unmarked dirt roads. In all, commutes to and from camp last around ninety minutes; at four days per camp and five camps per session, volunteers spend nearly three of their thirty-five days in Malawi on a bus driving to or away from the students they teach.
When reflecting on their World Camp session, one particular arrival stood out in the minds of many of the volunteers I interviewed. The morning was the group’s first at Chibweza Full Primary School, located in the Mponela area of Malawi’s Dowa district, a commute of average distance from Lilongwe but made lengthier by the large portion of it spent on hilly, unpaved roads. Rural communities throughout Malawi are rarely demarcated by signs or landmarks, and—with the buildings of one village closely resembling those of the next—often the first indication that World Camp bus has arrived at its final destination is the reaction it receives from a school’s expectant students and administrators. As the bus pulled alongside one of the school buildings and the driver settled on its final resting position for the day, scores of schoolchildren poured out of classroom doors to meet their arriving guests.

Owing in large measure to deaths attributable to HIV/AIDS, Malawi’s national population is heavily skewed toward ages 0-18, and particularly in the rural areas where approximately eighty-five percent of the population resides. At this point in the World Camp session, volunteers were used to the sheer numbers of students educated at the schools they visited: at Chibweza, for example, we planned to encounter 187 students spread across standards 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 (the school employs 6 teachers for 8 standards that average fifty students each). For these volunteers, what stood out about these students was the exuberance with which they inundated the vehicle, packing in so closely that the volunteers were unable to open the doors without knocking into the cramming students. As the driver cut the engine, the force of hundreds of small bodies began to literally rock the 25-seat bus back and forth. Their shrieks and erratic behavior

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4 Malawi adheres to a British-style education system in which “standards” are roughly analogous to “grades” in the United States system. Extrapolating students’ ages, however, is much more difficult, as students only advance to the next standard if they pass an annual qualifying test—a high bar for many rural students who miss large swaths of class due to agricultural responsibilities.
can easily be understood in hindsight as the exponent of childish excitement and the realization of an event foretold by their teachers many weeks—even months—in advance. But for the volunteers in the bus, initial surprise at the melee taking place outside turned steadily to awkwardness and soon to discomfort. Opting—as was often the temptation in uncomfortable scenarios during my time in the field—for my scholarly hat (headphones, in this case), I scrambled for my recording equipment as the students’ chant grew louder and more punctuated: “Azungu! Azungu! AZUNGU!!”

Though it remains a visceral memory for my interviewees, the initial arrival of the World Camp bus at Chibweza could just as easily be replaced with a scene from a Lilongwe market, conversation with Field Staff member, or cultural blunder with a host family during a homestay: all are imbued with a certain awkwardness born of the social, political, and economic circumstances that frame volunteers’ time in Malawi and, more broadly, World Camp’s broader cultural project. I vividly remember a scene from my first trip to the country that left me with a similar sense of discomfort. During a stay near Senga Bay in Salima District, some fellow volunteers and I were leisurely walking the shore of Lake Malawi when we met some exceedingly rambunctious, extroverted children. Over the course of a few minutes we danced and sang with them, playfully chased a few around in circles, built sand castles and sculptures with others. At one point, a fellow volunteer pointed out that one child was wearing a tattered YMCA t-shirt, and this volunteer had coincidentally worked as a YMCA counselor a previous

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5 muzungu, azungu (pl.) – literally “foreigner” in Chichewa, though often used interchangeably with “white person.” Similar terms appear in other Bantu languages with one oft-cited origin being a portmanteau of Swahili words translating roughly to “one who wanders around,” a direct reference to the European explorers and conquerors that carved up colonial-era Africa. One finds a particularly fertile discussion of the term in Barack Obama’s account of his first trip to Africa (Obama 1995:213).
summer. As if to emphasize the circuitous connection between them, the volunteer danced and sang a few bars of the Village People hit, encouraging—and eventually physically cajoling—the child to play along. Perhaps it was the introduction of a Western popular culture reference with limited, privileged reach—or even simply the way my fellow volunteer had compelled an impromptu performance from this stranger we had met—but in the moment I was struck by the vast, overwhelming differences encompassed by the backgrounds and cultural positions that the child and I each occupied. When I brought up the incident in a group discussion the subsequent evening my reservations were dismissed as unrelentingly analytical: one volunteer summed up her take on the encounter with the troublingly simple “Kids are kids are kids—get over it” (field notes, 1/12/07). But the clash these encounters represent and the power structures they lay bare are far too complex to be tossed off as the primordial configuration of all children everywhere. Indeed, in this chapter I argue that it is these clashes—productive though they may be of unsettling situations—that underpin the entirety of World Camp’s project, both the effectiveness of its classroom interventions and its continued success as a financially viable non-governmental organization. It is no surprise, then, that World Camp’s deployment of music plays a central role in the navigation of these situations.

The theme of this chapter borrows the first term from the archetype, “Educate.” In many ways, the goal of education—though perhaps the most straightforward—is also the weightiest task presented to volunteers. Though many have experience in front

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6 The presence of recycled clothing is a perennial point of curiosity for World Camp volunteers. In point of fact, the turning around of cast-off Western clothes is a multi-million dollar industry and the subject of a number of documentary films (chief among them the excellent “T-Shirt Travels” [Bloemen 2001]). Terms for these pieces of clothing vary widely, from “Kennedys” in Haiti after the American President who spearheaded the first shipments there (Kidder 2004:67) to “broni wa wo” in Ghana—literally “A white man has died” (Danqua 2009).
of some type of classroom, prior to their arrival few have tackled the breadth of World Camp’s curriculum as a student, much less as a teacher. In what follows the theme of education runs through each section: at times as a central force—as in my treatment of the World Camp curriculum—while at others—as in the case of the Malawian historical overview—as a peripheral description. Put another way, at times this chapter addresses head-on the task of education, but throughout it mirrors the task itself by offering the reader a selective education all its own. Though this scheme may risk relying too heavily on a formula, I hope it approaches the mentality enculturated among volunteers about the gravity of the task before them.

This chapter, like the two that follow it, unfolds in sections. First, I introduce the primary analytical paradigm I employ throughout this study—linguist and cultural critic Mary Louise Pratt’s “contact zones,” initially presented at a conference of the Modern Language Association and later published in an article considered by many to be a contemporary classic in the field. As I will show, recasting both cultural and musical contact within Pratt’s frame underscores the asymmetrical relationships between World Camp volunteers and their students in addition to opportunities for students’ navigation, editorialization, and refutation of dominant themes and strategies. With Pratt’s framework in mind, I move to a truncated and selective summation of Malawian history, specifically highlighting the contexts of inequality and subjugation that have played out across the region’s past and that inform its present in consequential ways. I argue that it is in the shadow of such a context that World Camp enters its host communities, teaches students, and imparts its ethical message. Lastly, I review and describe the World Camp curriculum, addressing its constituent parts in light of both Pratt’s framework and the neocolonial context of World Camp’s mission. I conclude by suggesting specific contact zones of interest as they relate to my discussion.
thus far and introduce music and dance as indispensable to both World Camp volunteers’ objectives and Malawian students’ navigation of them.

Pratt’s “Contact Zones”

Pratt’s 1991 essay “Arts of the Contact Zone” has gained wide commendations from across the academic disciplines for her succinct description of the social and cultural spaces illuminated by post-colonial and deconstructionist trends in postmodern cultural and historical criticism. Near the beginning of her essay she defines contact zones as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (Pratt 1991:39). Pratt’s discussion distinctively leaves the familiar, anthropologically rich contexts of colonialism and slavery for far less comfortable territory—the contemporary American university classroom—and locates the historically slighted themes of cultural contestation, self-determination, and ethnic heterogeneity in everyday settings. Given World Camp’s mission—especially its imperative, first and foremost, to “Educate”—Pratt’s framework is particularly fertile for the essay: it offers a conceptual frame for the social and cultural space that World Camp’s initiatives bring about in addition to employing that frame in World Camp’s most immediate setting—that of the classroom.

Pratt’s point of departure is a discussion of a document dating from 1613 written by Felipe Guaman Poma de Alaya, an indigenous Andean who—from what can be gathered from his own description—claimed noble Incan descent and whose relative command of Spanish suggests he may have performed a mediating bureaucratic function in the Spanish colonial hierarchy. Totaling over twelve hundred pages in length, his two-part tome entitled New Chronicle and Good Government is a highly
expressive critique of Spanish colonial rule addressed to King Philip III of Spain. Alternating throughout between Spanish and Quechua, Guman Poma’s epistle offers an exhaustive re-telling of Christian history with Andeans—rather than Europeans—at its center. Its contents include the biblical creation story recalibrated to include Amerindians; a five-part discussion of Andean history unfolding analogously alongside the normative European account visited on indigenous Peruvians in missions and schools; an encyclopedic summation of Andean customs, traditions, history, and lore; and four hundred pages of captioned illustrations. The work concludes with a transcribed simulated question and answer session held between Guaman Poma and the King in which the latter insistently asks the former for advice on good governance and equitable economic policy. Pratt emphasizes the breadth and scope of this document in detail, highlighting not only its multifarious and episodic construction but also the fact that its structure and indeed its title mobilize the “chronicle” genre—“the main writing apparatus through which the Spanish presented their American conquests to themselves” (Pratt 1991:34).

Pratt follows her description with an analysis of two rhetorical strategies—what she labels “arts”—present in Guaman Poma’s project and others like it. The first is autoethnography:

Guaman Poma’s New Chronicle is an instance of what I have proposed to call an autoethnographic text, by which I mean a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them. Thus if ethnographic texts are those in which European metropolitan subjects represent to themselves their others (usually their conquered others), autoethnographic texts are representations that the so-defined others construct in response to or in dialogue with those texts. (1991:35)

Pratt points out that examples of autoethnography are not texts, traditions, and customs that readily occur in autochthonous forms of expression: instead they constitute a navigation and appropriation of outside genres and strategies—rhetorical instruments.
that Pratt terms “the idioms of the metropolis or conquerer.” Poma Guaman’s entire project, for example, hinges on his adaptation of the written word, itself a metropolitan import (Incan society had no written language).

The second strategy Pratt highlights is that of transculturation, first termed and developed as such by sociologist Fernando Ortiz to sidestep “overly reductive concepts of acculturation and assimilation used to characterize culture under conquest”:

Ethnographers have used the term transculturation to describe processes whereby members of subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted by a dominant or metropolitan culture . . . While subordinate peoples do not usually control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what gets absorbed into their own and what it gets used for. Transculturation, like autoethnography, is a phenomenon of the contact zone. (1991:36)

Similar to autoethnography, transculturational strategies assert the agency and dynamism of those on the less powerful side of the contact zone spectrum. While materials imported into a contact zone are often (though not always) the domain of the dominant group, the degree of acceptance or resistance with which the materials are met are the prerogative of the subordinate group, culture, or community. One illustrative (if protracted) example common to both Pratt’s and my global area of interest is the introduction of missionary Christianity: initially brought about as a “civilizing” force to eliminate those belief systems viewed as subversive to the conquering powers’ financial ends, Christian beliefs over time were transculturated to address the roots causes of inequality and suffering in the form of Latin American and Sub-Saharan African liberation theology movements.

In her conclusion Pratt points to the modern American university classroom as a setting where discursive strategies like autoethnography and transculturation—due in large part to shifting administrative trends in multicultural academic requirements—play an increasingly salient role. As students are actively encouraged to contest
assigned texts and scholars from the students’ own heterogeneous, often non-normative perspectives, “the classroom function(s) not like a homogeneous community or a horizontal alliance but like a contact zone” (1991:39). In the context of her original presentation, this reference to classroom teaching draws an important parallel with the historical case of Guaman Poma’s chronicle to the Spanish monarch: though the two examples span hundreds of years and as such appear a cryptically disparate pairing, the social analysis they share illumines not only contact zones’ pervasiveness throughout human interactions but also opens the door to tracing patterns of dominance and subordination along historical timelines, a tract of inquiry I explore below.

One final attribute of Pratt’s essay that I discuss here is the fertile space for its application across disciplinary lines. Writing as a linguist, Pratt emphasizes written word and speech as the primary vehicles that strategies like autoethnography and transculturation employ, and in light of Guaman Poma’s epic this emphasis is apt. But just as colonial languages and written genres like that of the chronicle are imported into contact zones as the domain of the dominant group, so are other cultural devices and societal structures. As alluded to above, conquerors and colonizers often employ religion in this capacity, and the same has been true of economic systems, educational schemes, government bureaucracies, and cultural touchstones like art, dance, folklore, and music. As such, processes of transculturation have produced hybridized music and dance forms that resemble dominant genres while imbuing such genres with both indigenous meaning and presentational effect. Having undergone this transformation, these music and dance forms often re-enter the contact zone as the domain of their new authors and take on a communicative, autoethnographic significance that subverts the initial intent of the dominant group. Put another way, as the effect of these forms undergoes stylistic or presentational changes, their affect—their communicative power
and subversive potential—is also transformed. For this reason, ethnomusicologists can—and often do—convincingly adopt Pratt’s framework: while the currency of social interaction has changed from linguistic to musical, the sociological maneuver taking place remains the same.

Concentric Contact Zones: a Selective Malawian History

There is much in Pratt’s discussion that is relevant in World Camp’s context, and the themes she presents play out repeatedly throughout this essay. At face value, the most conspicuous contact zone for volunteers is the one featured in the episode that opened this chapter. The “other-ing” that volunteers experienced on the bus—playful and well-intentioned though it may be on the part of excited students—subverts the dominant/subordinate relationship constituted through volunteers’ instruction (or education) of their Malawian students. That being said, this contact zone is just one of many that buttresses the social, cultural, and political landscape onto which the World Camp bus drives each morning. Volunteers’ own knowledge and consideration of these factors—judging from both interviews and informal discussions—can be spotty, though through conversations and friendships with local Field Staff members volunteers can often develop a keen sense of the prominent urban/rural divide that permeates Malawian social life. In order to contextualize my own analysis of World Camp’s project, what follows is an overview of Malawian history that hones in on those instances of cultural and social encounter where Pratt’s framework is relevant.

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7 For its part, World Camp’s central office provides all volunteers with a Recommended Reading List via email prior to their matriculation and asks volunteers to complete a Volunteer Preparedness Test to be evaluated during each program session’s Orientation.
The first permanent incursion of Europeans into present-day Malawi is usually dated to 1859 with Scottish explorer and evangelist David Livingstone’s “discovery” of Lake Malawi—then named Lake Nyasa. Despite his death from dysentery in 1873, Livingstone’s indelible influence on the region led to the establishment in 1875 of the Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland followed the next year by the Blantyre Mission of the Church of Scotland (Ross 2009:14). The work of these missions was central to the political machinations that led to Nyasaland’s formal recognition as the British Central African Protectorate in 1891, as public opinion in Scotland fervently rallied around Livingstone’s vision of an “Africa for Africans” in which Western-educated and Christianized Africans might join in European commercial and intellectual exchange on their own accord. Though the Liberal Scots ultimately won out, their sentiment broke ranks with the normative mentality of businessman Cecil Rhodes who prominently advocated for expanded White settlement in Sub-Saharan Africa with economic exploitation of land and labor being his singular objective (Pakenham 1991:354).

The historical legacy of this Scramble-era dichotomy is twofold. First, Nyasaland, first as the British Central African Protectorate and later the Nyasaland Protectorate, enjoyed a degree of relative autonomy from its colonial overlords that neighboring present-day Zambia (Northern Rhodesia)\(^8\) and Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) did not. What agency there was for Africans stemming from this autonomy was tenuous and piecemeal: Nyasaland natives paid high levies to work their own land and enjoyed few political rights outside tribal systems of governance. Additionally, a lack of investment from the British left an independent Malawi far poorer than Zambia and

\(^8\) Northern Rhodesia—as it was known until Zambia’s own independence in 1964—was unique among African colonies in that it was originally annexed not by a European power, but rather Rhodes’s own British South Africa Company (Bloemen 2001).
Zimbabwe where the payoff of more acute oppression was domestic infrastructure and vestigial international commerce. These issues notwithstanding, the Scottish missionaries placed a premium on education rather than economic dividends, leading directly to an intellectual class of missionary graduates who spearheaded resistance movements throughout the early twentieth century and whose efforts in turn laid the groundwork for Malawi’s independence struggle. Secondly, Scottish advocacy on behalf of native Africans before the British government—in concert with Livingstone’s storied rapport with chiefs and commoners alike—endeared Scotland to Malawi in the short term and, as the era of African independence dawned, much of Europe followed suit. The legacy of this convivial relationship is evident the pro-Western foreign policy to which Malawi has hewed both prior to and following democratic reforms in 1994. One problematic result of this relationship has been the mixed success of Structural Adjustment Programs initiated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund that failed to bring Malawi lasting economic buoyancy and quashed many domestic industries. Malawi’s open-door policy has continued to extend to international aid outfits and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), of which World Camp Incorporated is one. Drawing on a long legacy, Missionary Christianity remains alive and well throughout Malawi, and the sites of Livingstone’s original missions are held sacred.

As was—and, in some instances, still is—the case for several African countries, Malawi’s independence in 1964 ushered in a period of one-party rule under an autocratic leader who stifled political dissent. Born in Nyasaland, Hastings Kamuzu Banda trained as a physician in the United States and practiced in Scotland where he stoked his interest in Nyasaland politics from afar before returning in 1958 to Nyasaland after a period in Ghana. Upon independence Banda re-christened his home
country Malawi and quickly set about consolidating political rule. Shortly after he assumed office he fired several prominent cabinet members as a rebuff to a proposition that his powers be curbed. This “Cabinet Crisis” as it came to be called paved the way for Banda’s unchallenged election upon ratification of a new constitution in 1966; in 1970 the one-party legislature declared Banda President for Life.

Banda’s regime was epitomized by a pro-Western foreign policy that welcomed the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programs in addition to maintaining official diplomatic ties with Apartheid-era South Africa—a move for which he was chastised by other African heads of state. Despite his reputation abroad as a rosy internationalist (and commendations he accrued for his perceived respect for women’s rights), Banda’s cult of personality was methodically indoctrinated and uncompromisingly upheld. Much of his following was galvanized along ethnic lines: a member of the majority Chewa tribe, Banda did much to equate Malawian-ness with Chewan-ness and in doing so reified the popular majority he needed to remain in power while disenfranchising minority ethnic groups. He was never seen in public without a flywhisk visible, a common accessory for a Chewa witch doctor and, additionally, a nod to Banda’s cosmopolitan status as a Western-educated physician.

In one particularly prominent case of ethnic-based exploitation, all women in Malawi were expected “to regularly express their gratitude to (Banda)” through the systematic instruction and performance of national songs and—even more so—dance (Gilman 2009:41). In Chewa tradition a special relationship exists between a woman and her older brother or uncle: it is this male nkhoswe—rather than the woman’s own father—who provides her with support and counsel. Banda appropriated this relationship for his political ends, declaring himself nkhoswe of the nation and establishing—at least in theory—this familial relationship to all women in the country.
As such, all Malawian women were required to learn and rehearse national songs and dances constantly, all in preparation for an impromptu visit from the President or another party dignitary. These rehearsals were organized primarily at the school or village level, but dance groups were also required to exist at the university and corporate level, particularly in urban areas where presidential appearances—particularly those covered by the international media—were commonplace. In addition to knowing all the requisite steps, all women were also required to own the “national dress” consisting of matching, ankle-length fabric with prominent placement of the President’s visage, name, and title. These compulsory songs and dances trivialized and appropriated the important contribution women’s groups’ performances had made to the struggle for independence: what began as a grassroots, multifaceted effort that drew on public performance as a way to spur support for issues important to women was co-opted by Banda and his mostly-male majority party to enforce political and cultural hegemony.

In the early 1990s international pressure on Banda to increase transparency in his government led to an opening for mounting internal pressure as well. As international donors and aid organizations withdrew financial backing, many view a 1992 missive from the country’s Catholic leaders as the coup de grace for the Banda regime. The Bishops’ Lenten Letter called for multiparty elections and—amid other grievances—insisted on a renewed emphasis on human rights. By generously citing scripture throughout, the Bishops appealed to a Malawian citizenry that was deeply religious, thereby tapping into the only remaining source of moral authority not fully monopolized by one-party rule. Just as it had during the respective founding both of Nyasaland and Malawi, the international religious community—particularly in Scotland—offer their full-fledged support to the reform movement. In the weeks
following the letter’s release, church attendance swelled and raucous services led to the first public protests in decades, replete with the singing of religious and liberatory hymns. In 1994 a two-part referendum revoked Banda’s President for Life status and subsequently ejected him from office in favor of Bakili Muluzi, a candidate who—as a Muslim, ethnic Yao, and Southerner—differed markedly from Banda. After Muluzi’s two terms he was succeeded by the current President, Bingu wa Mutharika, who was himself elected to a second term in 2009. Though their elections have seen the orderly transfer of power and the relatively healthy emergence of new political parties, both of Malawi’s modern-era heads of state have been criticized for superficial democratization and tepid responses to the HIV epidemic (Lwanda 2002:157-158).

Albeit a limited overview, one can begin to identify the contact zones that have typified social and cultural interaction in Malawi since its inception as the British Central African Protectorate in 1891. With Scottish missionaries came the first contact zone in which a nonnegotiable emphasis on religious conversion and Western education was tempered by relatively equitable treaties made with local chiefs and village headman and a fierce opposition to the practice of slavery as practiced by Swahili traders along the coast of Lake Nyasa. Contemporary analyses have vindicated Livingstone and his ilk as having had few imperialist tendencies and view his support of commerce and industry as a means for empowering native Africans as Christian equals. As alluded to above, the introduction of written language, philosophy, and Liberal economic systems—often through the vehicle of Christianity—became the underpinnings for the anti-colonial resistance movements that were to follow. As such, the transculturation of missionary ethics in this first contact zone has had a multifarious effect on modern Malawi: social themes of decorum, order, and civility persist—captured in part by Malawi’s reputation as the Warm Heat of Africa—but so does
seldom qualified privilege and respect paid to white foreigners in a manner less
circumspect than I found to be the case in Zambia, Zimbabwe, or Kenya.

The second contact zone distinguishable from this historical overview is more
overt—both for its nearness to the present and thus its fastidious documentation by
scholars and researchers, but also for the ways its social and cultural ramifications are
still felt by living Malawians. Once domains of the public and mobilized in opposition
to colonial hegemonic processes, music and dance were subverted under President
Banda, in part depleting them of their social power and instead asserting cultural
traditions as instruments of social control. With the passage of “public decency” laws
like those banning women from wearing trousers and men from growing beards, Banda
conflicted his power to orchestrate the terms of musical performance with his power to
dictate the terms of Malawians’ physical appearance and public behavior—all became
the unquestioned domain of the single party regime. With the end of Banda’s rule came
a period of political and cultural ambiguity that persists to this day. Historian Harri
Englund has described this new Malawi as a “democracy of chameleons” in which
“Malawians have been exposed to several bewildering shifts in their leaders’ identities
and allegiances” (2002:12). In this shifting cultural vacuum, the role of music and dance
remains—to many degrees—up for grabs. Folklorist Lisa Gilman has suggested that
with the advent of what she terms “multipartyism” Malawian women in particular
have been emancipated to support—often with the same group dances and uniforms of
the Banda years—the political parties and issues of their choosing. However, Gilman is
shrewd to suggest that these autoethnographic strategies can frequently reify patterns
of dominance rather than transform them, and in post-Banda Malawi the tendency to
relapse into modes of unadulterated praise is prominent:
The relationships between praise performers and the people they praise are frequently asymmetrical: those uplifted through songs frequently enjoy high economic, social, cultural, religious or political status . . . by singing songs of praise performers symbolically legitimate and accept a leader’s authority and can reinforce social hierarchies. (2009:17)

In the aftermath of the Banda contact zone, the fledgling atmosphere of multipartyism suggests a context where music and dance are contested and repackaged constantly. Finally and with the addition of a Life Skills discipline to the Malawian national curriculum, music and dance have taken on a formal task as a vehicle for classroom instruction (field notes, 7/14/10). Though songs and dances have for years been deployed informally for purposes of classroom instruction, their recent codification and institutionalization by the Ministry of Education mirrors the compulsory music and dance requirements from the Banda era.

The World Camp Curriculum and Induced Discursive Symmetry

In the concluding section of this chapter I return to the focus of this study—World Camp’s four-day camps—having now been contextualized by the contact zones that came before it. With their drive into the camp each morning, World Camp volunteers constitute yet another contact zone: the asymmetries of privilege, education, wealth, and (often) race are evident in anecdotes like the one that opened this chapter. As was the case for missionaries nearly a century and a half ago, the primary mode of interaction between members of the dominant and subordinate group is classroom instruction. Volunteers teach from a curriculum that is distributed via email before volunteers arrive and dedicate their first several days in Malawi committing the document largely to heart through simulated classroom lessons and feedback from coordinators and other volunteers. These preparation sessions take place exclusively in
the World Camp house in Lilongwe, and—as volunteers commit larger and larger portions to memory—so too builds their anticipation of the first day of camp.

The curriculum’s sections cover the four days of each camp with each day divided into morning and afternoon sessions. The morning sessions are largely dedicated to covering factual information about HIV/AIDS and environmental stewardship, though often packaged and presented in novel ways that induce active participation from students. The curriculum instructs volunteers to continually ask questions of their students to double-check the level of comprehension taking place, with an emphasis placed on asking follow-up or expository questions that wean students away from one-word or yes-or-no responses. Volunteers typically put their own creative spin on these morning sessions: often teaching teams of two will trade off teaching specific sections with the inactive volunteer plants him or herself among students on the floor of the classroom. Other strategies I observed volunteers employing included loud screams of affirmation to signify correct answers, intentionally high levels of physical contact between volunteers and their students, non-normative classroom orientations (e.g. students sitting in a circle with teachers in the middle), and requiring students to sit interspersed by gender. (It was commonplace in all ten schools I observed for students to default to a classroom orientation in which all girls sat near the front of the classroom while all boys—in chairs, if possible—sat in the very back, often rendering a distance of 10 to 15 feet between the gender-based groups.) In terms of content, these morning sessions include one of the more controversial sections of the curriculum: a condom demonstration using bananas performed first by both volunteers and subsequently by their students. Though this section rightfully commands a certain level of “shock value” in the eyes of Malawi’s conservative ruralists, many of these

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9 See Appendix C for timetable breakdown of the four-day curriculum.
morning sections contain subjects that would ordinarily solicit similar levels of discomfort or uneasiness in a traditional rural classroom setting. Among the supposed truisms that the World Camp curriculum challenges are the commonly-held assertion that *azungu* are immune from HIV infection, that deforestation is merely the act of cutting down trees carelessly (rather than the ecologically correct definition of cutting down trees more quickly than they can be replanted), and that HIV-status can be deduced merely from physical appearance.

In applying Pratt’s framework, the interaction between volunteers and their students as well as the information covered by the curriculum falls squarely in the domain of the contact zone. Given their asymmetrically prominent status not only as guests but also as foreign educators, World Camp volunteers are afforded the latitude to conduct their classes using strategies—alternative seating and horizontal, convivial
interaction being two examples—that strike a marked contrast with modes of instruction common among local Malawian teachers. Whereas a Malawian might be thought foolhardy or strange for insisting that boys and girls sit next to one another, volunteers’ status in the contact zone enables them to take pedagogical risks without sacrificing the trust or attention of students. To the contrary: one volunteer who teaches elementary school fulltime in the United States remarked that the blanket acceptance and eager responses she received in Malawian classrooms caused her to worry that her approach to teaching might appear rusty or disjointed when she returned to the US (field notes, 7/21/10). This pedagogical license also extends to the curriculum’s content: volunteers wielding condoms and bananas and speaking forthrightly about the sexual transmission of HIV fulfill a role that, under autochthonous circumstances, could not be as easily performed by a Malawian teacher with a local reputation and level of status to protect.

This issue of pedagogical license and volunteer privilege in the contact zone becomes even more pronounced during the afternoon sessions that, following a recent series of curricular revisions, are collectively known as “Empowerment.” Whereas the morning sessions focus much more on the transmission of factual or empirical curricular information—how HIV is transmitted or the science behind global warming, for example—afternoon Empowerment sessions’ content concerns social relationships, gender roles, and Malawian students’ navigation of them. The content can range from introductory, even perfunctory conversations about who does and does not have a girlfriend to the exceptionally important and relevant issues of forced sex, pregnancy, women’s role in the sexual decision-making process, and students’ career prospects. Unlike the morning sessions, Empowerment sessions are segregated by gender with male students entering a classroom with a male volunteer and vice versa. Coordinators
not directly involved in teaching during Empowerment take vigilant steps to make sure younger children from the village and adult community members alike do not stray too close to classrooms where volunteers are teaching as the content and tone of the conversations taking place are—by and large—strictly taboo in any rural public forum, especially a classroom. In these sessions volunteers stress even more explicitly the fact that they view the relationships with their students as relationships between friends, not one between students and their teachers. As an Empowerment leader myself, I constantly found myself assuring my students that the conversations taking place were confidential—that I would not be sharing them with female students, local teachers, or even other volunteers. A sense of trust such as this can take months of close friendship to build in volunteers’ everyday lives, and I found myself sharing aspects of my own personal life with students that I would hesitate to reveal to volunteers I had to see for the entire five-week session.

In this chapter I have summarized the historical and political circumstances that shape the atmosphere in which World Camp volunteers teach—an atmosphere I suggest framing as a contact zone. By definition, the contact zone is a discursive space into which dominant and subordinate groups—in this instance World Camp volunteers and the students they teach, respectively—contribute their own cultural meanings and self-definitions. In my discussion of the World Camp curriculum, I have touched on the cultural material World Camp brings into the contact zone—empirical data, medical and scientific realities—as well as the strategies volunteers employ to convey such material—namely the establishment of horizontal, symmetrical relationships meant to induce collaborative discussion about challenging issues. The World Camp curriculum is a rich, sprawling document, and this truncated summary does little to convey its centrality for World Camp’s potential success. Nevertheless, this summation does point
to two central themes that permeate both World Camp’s mission and this study. First, the content of a World Camp classroom—though steadily growing less so with each passing year as multifarious HIV/AIDS initiatives take root across Malawi—is jarringly unfamiliar for the majority of Malawian students. Furthermore, what experience students do have with speaking plainly and openly about sex, condoms, and puberty takes place as far away from a primary school classroom as possible. World Camp volunteers’ privilege as both guests and foreigners—those attributes that correspond to their dominant status in the contact zone—cedes them the pedagogical license to begin classroom discussions that might otherwise never get off the ground. Secondly, in order for the curricular and ethical messages volunteers introduce to take root, levels of social trust and mutual understanding must, too, be introduced into the equation. While the shock-and-awe factor that their otherness induces gets them in the door, volunteers’ remaining tasks—to inspire in their students a desire to foster and sustain social change—cannot rely alone on volunteers’ privileged status in the contact zone. In the two remaining chapters, I discuss and analyze the utility and success of World Camp’s musical strategies to enable and perpetuate the social trust, mutual understanding, and discursive symmetry that leave the door open to lasting, systemic transformation.
Chapter 2

Music for Inspiration, Music as Inspiration

Throughout the course of a Malawi Program’s session, World Camp coordinators perform a battery of tasks, the vast majority of which go unseen and unremarked upon by volunteers. As World Camp’s administrative emissaries to volunteers and Malawians alike, coordinators are entrusted with responsibilities ranging from the essential to the mundane, at times simultaneously embodying both. Coordinators handle business-oriented transactions like the remuneration of in-country Field Staff members and vehicle upkeep; oversee volunteer health and safety—everything from shepherding unwell volunteers to a local clinic to enforcing discipline when volunteers abandon the in-town “buddy” system; and serve as liaisons to local school administrators and host communities while overseeing the smooth operation of each camp day. All coordinators are themselves former volunteers, often nearly equal in age and level of education to the volunteers in their charge. As such, the relationship between coordinators and volunteers can be multifaceted and amorphous: coordinators often balance a sense of camaraderie with volunteers as cohorts sharing a geopolitical origin with a need for administrative distance that enables effective decision-making in scenarios of unease or mishap.
One task, however, that coordinators relish equally is the opportunity to meet incoming volunteers at the arrivals gate of Lilongwe International Airport. Nearly all volunteers are touching down on the continent of Africa for their first time—many of them after hours of travel alone on unfamiliar airlines prone to inconsistent record keeping and luggage handling. The sight of a smiling face in a World Camp T-shirt as one emerges from customs can be the perfect anecdote to stress built up over months of logistical tightrope walking. The ostensible straightforwardness of World Camp Inc.’s objective—to teach HIV education in rural schools—often has a dual effect for aspiring volunteers: spry satisfaction at the distilled punchiness of the message (“Yeah, I’m going to Africa this summer to teach about HIV”) tinged with a certain uneasiness—born of unexpectedly jocular exchanges with World Camp US staff or the relatively few application-related hurdles to scale—that the whole operation might be a well-crafted scam. During one trip to the airport as a coordinator, the two volunteers I met there fit this mold perfectly. As if following a script, so too did their smiles of relief slowly turn to open-mouthed expressions of curiosity and interest at the scenery viewed through the windows of the Land Rover as we returned back to the World Camp house. Gesticulations and camera-flashes were paid to the usual sites of novelty—charcoal balanced precariously on the backs of dilapidated bicycles, bustling open-air markets on street corners, goods fearlessly hawked to speeding motorists at close range—all in the midst of a volley of questions leveled at me (likely thought for the first and last time an unabashed expert) and gamely met by my own reassuring if circumspect responses. “My lord,” one of volunteers exclaimed, “I feel like I’m right in the middle of an issue of National Geographic!” (field notes, 5/22/10).

Perhaps not surprisingly, World Camp anticipates these types of reactions on the part of volunteers and deftly shapes them into engaging recruiting strategies. The initial
World Camp advertisement that caught my eye—strategically nestled in a banner of advertisements on Facebook—read like a personal challenge: “Want to do something worthwhile this winter?¹⁰ Come make a difference with World Camp in Malawi teaching about HIV and environmental issues.” Now as then, World Camp’s website is rife with images of children—most of them too young to ever appear in a World Camp classroom—interspersed with the smiling faces of volunteers, often dancing or clapping in scenes with their students on the school grounds. Though additional clicks of the mouse provide an inquisitive visitor with information about program costs, annual office reports, and tax-exempt status, the home page flutters with buzzwords and platitudes intended to engender an emotional response—“World Camp, Inc.: Educate, Inspire, Change” or “Empowering communities through Education and Support” (World Camp 2011). World Camp’s YouTube channel is no different: across thirteen separate informational and recruiting videos volunteers are depicted in the schoolyard dancing, in the classroom teaching, and at the house in Lilongwe packing and unpacking the bus looking both purposeful and exhilarated. Other clips include sit-down interviews with coordinators, volunteers, and Field Staff members interspersed with images from camp and a pulsating musical score.¹¹ In one particular interview,

¹⁰ Unlike the two sessions for which I served as coordinator in the summer of 2010, my first trip to Malawi in January 2007 was a four-week January session populated by students at colleges that have a stand-alone January or Winter Term. Accordingly, World Camp placed this advertisement only on the profiles of students whose schools follow such a calendar.

¹¹ In addition to their resemblance to the promotional materials of organizations like Worldvision, UNICEF, and Save The Children, these clips echo a cinematographic style preponderant in a number recent, widely-distributed African-inspired documentary films including Invisible Children, War/Dance, God Grew Tired of Us, and the Malawi-themed I Am Because We Are. Similar musical tropes have also appeared as of late in larger budget works of historical fiction that focus their gaze on African political and humanitarian issues: The Constant Gardener, Blood Diamond, Hotel Rwanda, The Last King of Scotland, and Invictus, many of which were cited by volunteers as having framed their expectations about Malawi.
World Camp co-founder Laurel Crosswell echoes nearly exactly the sentiment I heard in the Land Rover: “It’s really exactly what you expect, you know?” Crosswell informs us. “It’s like walking into a National Geographic film. And that’s what’s sort of surprising, you know? You think, ‘it’s not going to be all those scary and poverty-stricken things you see on TV.’ And then it is” (World Camp 2008a).

Functioning in a state of perennial financial uncertainty, World Camp administrators understandably seek to imbue these and other recruiting materials with the phrases, images, and sound bytes that will ultimately lead to volunteers signing on the dotted line. These strategies tap into a zeitgeist of humanitarianism suffused with an air of adventure that consistently attracts volunteers who express either an amorphous, inexplicable affinity for the African continent or a level of discomfort with the perceived monotony of their daily lives in their home country. To offer an example, one volunteer happened upon the World Camp website after a Google search for the phrase “I want to go to Africa” (field notes, 6/24/10). Many others described wishing to replicate or approximate the experience of studying abroad—“study abroad on steroids” as another volunteer put it—in an effort to pair the desire for a meaningful cross-cultural experience with academic or pre-professional merit. Whatever the name or categories they give their rationale, volunteers consistently share an incoming desire to be inspired by what they encounter. Put another way, they are beguiled into the contact zone World Camp represents on the basis that they will be inspired by what they find there, and—through recruiting materials that prominently and intentionally feature African musical tropes—World Camp relies heavily on the premise of this inspiration to ensure its financial solvency.
Inspiration in the World Camp Model

The inspiration that concerns us in this chapter is not limited to the inspiration mentioned above—that is, the inspiration volunteers themselves experience—but rather includes the inspiration volunteers ostensibly seek to engender among their students and—by extension—in their students’ communities. As World Camp Inc.’s original use of the archetype implies, the inspiration students experience in the World Camp contact zone—be it through an interactive classroom lesson, a watershed conversation or revelation, or a less tangible emotional experience—serves as the synaptic bridge between the education the students receive and the systemic social change that, volunteers hope, students seek to thereafter bring about. The Latin origin of the term “inspire” is concerned with breathing into or upon, and similar language—that of “filling” or “spurring” to action—is preponderant throughout the World Camp curriculum.

In light of Pratt’s framework, inspiration—alongside less invitational forms of asymmetrical social contact like coercion, conversion, and conscription—can only be present in the contact zone: the terms and strictures of engagement as negotiated by both cultures are unique to their interaction with one another. As such, inspiration in a World Camp classroom looks very different from inspiration in a local Malawian classroom. Music’s role in this encounter is similarly unique: as with all cultural input in the contact zone, its presence and function are intentionally situated and engineered by the dominant culture in the service of the broader ethical project at hand. In both the schoolyard and classroom, music is mobilized for inspiration. But this prescriptive role for music is rooted initially in a descriptive analysis of its efficacy. As alluded to in this chapter’s opening vignette, music—like images of bloated bellies or teetering bicycles—has an inspirational component often independent from any intentional deployment in
contact zones and other social arenas. Only subsequently do these moments of spontaneous inspiration lead to regimes of strategic deployment: music’s presence in the World Camp curriculum, after all, came about only after World Camp’s founders were inspired by what they perceived as music’s inspirational and communicative potential in existing Malawian contexts. The snowballing or chaining effect by which musical constructs or visual images are first perceived as efficacious and subsequently deployed as such is particularly salient in contact zones: when cultural encounters are imbued—as they are in the case of World Camp’s interventions—with high expectations, the success of certain performative strategies—like music and its ability to inspire both Malawian students and World Camp volunteers—previses the success of the intervention as a whole.

In this and the following chapter I turn to the bulk of my ethnographic fieldwork, describing and analyzing a series of musical encounters that occurred during my twelve weeks of research with World Camp, Inc. during the months of May, June, July, and August 2010. Expanding on a premise established near the end of the previous chapter, the specific instances I point to include scenarios in which the pedagogical license afforded to volunteers upon their entrance into the contact zone is drawn upon in the musical realm. To begin I introduce ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino’s treatment of Charles Peirce’s semiotic theory as a strategy for analyzing the social bonds created through musical encounters, a helpful metric by which to analyze World Camp’s own application of musical strategies. In Chapter 2 I describe the first two iterations of music-making occurring in the World Camp curriculum: Mornings Songs and Classroom Songs. In my discussion of each and at times employing Turino’s

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12 I admittedly borrow this nomenclature from Turino’s treatment of semantic snowballing and semiotic chaining processes (2008:9), though its application here is discrete from his definitions.
typology as a guide, I cite specific sites of inspiration for both volunteers and students, an analysis I continue with my treatment of end-of-camp Performances in Chapter 3. The documented examples I reference can be found either by accessing the embedded links in the electronic version of this paper or by following along on the accompanying DVD.\textsuperscript{13} Any English translations not provided in-text are found in Appendix B.

**Turino’s Semiotic Theory**

The analytical framework I primarily employ in this chapter was first developed by mathematician and philosopher Charles Peirce and later elaborated upon by Turino, most prominently in his monograph *Music and Social Life*. Defined as semiotics (or semiology), the paradigm trades on the patterns of meaning we assign to certain concepts or signs that ultimately call to mind something other than themselves. The patterns of significance effected by these signs’ objects—that is, the thing to which each sign refers—constitute and reify certain tracts of knowledge that take on communicative power when they are held in common by a group or society. In his study, Turino highlights three specific types of signs endemic to music, the first two of which—icons and indices—are particularly well suited to World Camp’s context.

An icon’s relationship to its object is one of resemblance. When experienced in the present, an icon’s resemblance to a previously experienced phenomenon recalls certain thoughts or emotions. Turino volunteers the example of twangy guitars and southern dialects as being *iconic* of country music: even if the signs themselves haven’t been experienced before, they suggest a resemblance to something that has, and that

\textsuperscript{13} The online versions of the clips I provide are on a private YouTube channel only accessible via the unique URL addresses in this .pdf document i.e. not searchable by the internet’s general public. These URLs should not be reproduced or forwarded without the explicit permission of the author.
resemblance conjures an emotional response (2008:6). Icons are powerful for the imaginative space they concede to those that experience them. Based on how one arrives at his associations, an iconic response for me (e.g. hearing a folk singer and being reminded of a childhood experience at summer camp) might differ gravely from an iconic response for my father (hearing a folk singer and being reminded of the tumult of the Vietnam war era) even as the icon itself—a heretofore unfamiliar folk singer—is the same. Drawing on an example from this chapter’s introductory vignette, different volunteers might have different reactions to the scenes they experience on the ride from the airport: a volunteer who has only experienced conditions of poverty through sensationalized television accounts will assign the drive a very different iconic significance from a volunteer who had a similar cross-cultural experience during a Spring Break trip to a Latin American country.

Turino’s second type of sign is an index, and its relationship to its object is one of co-occurrence. The significance of an index rests on the co-occurrence of the sign with its object. Smoke, for example, occurs alongside fire, and one who encounters smoke draws on the personal experience of its co-occurrence with fire as a way of reaping significance from the sign itself. Another example might be a book or song: upon the mention of a favorite book, we often travel in our minds to the exact time and place where we experienced reading that book and in turn we revisit the sensation the co-occurrence brought us. Indexical associations are highly personalized because they depend on very specific personal experiences that occur at the level of the individual. Arriving at the Lilongwe airport for the second time, I glowed with nostalgia about the co-occurrence of the airport with my first trip to the country, an index inaccessible to someone arriving in Malawi for his or her first time. Indices can also draw upon experiences of other signs: if, for example, I experience for a second time the folk singer
mentioned in the above paragraph, that icon—the experience of remembering a summer camp memory—becomes itself the object of a new index.

Turino’s impetus for integrating Peircian semiotics into his approach to the sociological study of music rests on his claim that the arts lead to a maximal sensory experience:

> With the semiotic chains of effects produced by iconic and indexical signs in music and art, sensual perception, feeling, physical reaction, and symbolic thought may all eventually occur, thus involving and integrating different parts of the self which are sometimes conventionally referred to as ‘emotional,’ ‘physical,’ and ‘rational.’ This type of fuller integration is more likely to occur in response to phenomena like music and the other arts as opposed to fields where symbols (words and their dictionary definitions) predominate and primarily exercise the analytical parts of the self. (2008:15)

The full engagement of the body’s “sensual perception, feeling, physical reaction, and symbolic thought” mentioned in this passage might coalesce for Turino in a term like “artistic fulfillment” or “social wholeness.” As evidenced by the musical examples that follow this exposition, “inspiration”—at least in World Camp’s context—is as salient a term as any. Volunteers experience a wide range of sensual perceptions and physical reactions during their time in the contact zone—everything from the pungency of drop toilets to the rawness of physical exhaustion to the vindication won by students’ success—but none may be as visceral as during the performance of and their participation in music and dance.

**Morning Songs**

**OBJECTIVE:** To increase the comfort level between World Camp (WC) teachers and their students, to introduce yourself as a high energy, creative educator, to build group unity and responsibility, and to have fun (you and the students). (World Camp 2010:11)

The first iteration of music-making in the World Camp model comes at the outset of each camp day, and as such opens the very beginning of World Camp’s residency in
a host community. Volunteers disembark from the bus and head for the largest open space that the school’s grounds have to offer—usually a soccer pitch or common area enclosed by school buildings. Volunteers form a large circle with students and local teachers intentionally alternating male and female students whenever possible, and taking pains not to place any two volunteers next to one another. The volunteer who has been designated Team Leader for the length of the camp heads into the middle of the circle with a Field Staff member to translate. Yelling at the top of his or her lungs, the team leader introduces him or herself and the Field Staff member to the encircled crowd before inviting all other members of the World Camp team—volunteers and Field Staff members alike—into the circle for “Marching Song.” At the conclusion of “Marching Song” other volunteers and Field Staff members enter the center of the circle as the previous leaders assume the holes they leave in the chain. In this manner all the Morning Songs are performed in turn: along with “Marching Song,” regular entries in the repertory include “The Banana Song,” “Humba, Humba,” “Phazi,” and “Boom Chika Boom” (DVD clips 1-5). Though the curriculum suggests others, these Morning Songs were the only ones to be performed during the summer, and interviewers with returning coordinators suggest that songs have formed the core of the repertory for a number of preceding sessions. Like much in World Camp praxis, changes like the elimination of certain Morning Songs are passed on orally from coordinators to volunteers even as the official change is not made to the curriculum.

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14 In addition to ensuring the smooth operation of the camp day, the Team Leader is tasked with opening each day’s series of Morning Songs. Other responsibilities such as coordinating the serving of lunch, ensuring that classrooms stay well-supplied, and keeping different rooms on approximately the same schedule also fall to the Team Leader. The Team Leader role was consistently a point of contention throughout the summer: volunteers often felt short-changed by being tasked with administrative and logistics-focused work after being led to believe through recruiting materials that they would be teaching at each and every camp.
Of these five songs, nearly all follow call-and-response forms: when introducing the songs, volunteers instruct students to “do what I do and say what I say,” expecting students to follow variations in rhythm, volume, and lyrical content. At times—as in the case of “Phazi”—students respond knowing the meaning of the words they are repeating; in others—as in the case of “Boom Chika Boom”—students’ repetitions are purely phonetic in the absence of the English lyrics’ meaning. But whether or not the lyrical content of these songs is co-intelligible is unimportant: the significance of the call-and-response form lies in the establishment of a mimetic relationship between teacher and student that lasts beyond the school grounds and into the classroom.

Framing the performance of Morning Songs in this way has both pedagogical and sociological importance. By establishing a call-and-response relationship with their students, volunteers foreshadow the means by which they present curricular content to students in the classroom. Just as volunteers call out song lyrics to their students, so do volunteers either say or demonstrate information in the classroom to which their students respond by mimicking or replicating the action for themselves. One particularly demonstrative example of this call-and-response form conceived pedagogically in the classroom comes during Day Two’s condom demonstration in which volunteers act out the proper procedure for application and disposal of a condom using a banana. Beating back fits of laughter, students follow along with their own banana and condom as volunteers circulate the room, making collective and individual corrections when necessary. Ideally, students mimic the actions of their volunteer teachers through to the very end as everyone who has a banana peels and eats it to demonstrate the non-toxic nature of the condoms’ lubricant.

\[15\] See Appendix B for Morning Songs texts.
The call-and-response strategy also subverts attitudes about the place of acceptability in public performance, encouraging (even inspiring!) students to step beyond their comfort zones not just in the classroom but also on the school grounds in front of their local teachers and peers. Volunteers anticipate their students’ resistance to this social exposure by both choosing a circle as the opening formation where each member is equally visible to other students and by breaking up as much as possible cliques of friends that seek safety in numbers. The more enthusiastic and gesticular volunteers are in their “calls,” the more comfortable students become in their voiced and embodied responses. Each performance of “Marching Song” following the first day includes local teachers in addition to Field Staff and volunteers in the opening circle. As students see their local teachers—ordinarily sources of discipline and decorum—“pound the nsima”16

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16 *Nsima* or *nshima*, a thick cornmeal, is the staple food of the Malawian diet. Along with either beans or a vegetable relish, *nsima* is also the staple food of the lunch World Camp serves its students every day. Though not a requirement, World Camp encourages
or “shake their booty,” they, too, begin to loosen up and push the bounds of comfort and acceptability in public performance. Furthermore and in a performance like “Marching Song,” boundaries regarding women and men’s societal roles are challenged (women are almost exclusively the preparers of nsima, for example) in anticipation of broader and more multi-faceted discussions of the subject in afternoon Empowerment sessions. These shared or communal aspects of “Morning Songs” ultimately serve to emphasize the shared nature of the tasks before Malawians generally: though students are the ones being educated in World Camp’s model, action from community members of all ages and statuses is required in combating biomedical and environmental threats.

Turino’s semiotics suggest an analysis of Morning Songs that highlights the social cohesion and community-building evident in their deployment in the World Camp model. As is the case for numerous sections of the curriculum, volunteers often doubt the efficacy of Morning Songs based on how they are detailed in print. “Corny” and “campy” were descriptors for Morning Songs offered by volunteers preceding the first camp (field notes, 5/19/10). More so than fearing social awkwardness, other volunteers simply doubted whether Morning Songs wouldn’t leave students with a poor first impression.17 In a marked contrast during their last hours in Malawi, several

17 Comments like these from volunteers—particularly prior to their first camp experience—underscore a certain level of unpreparedness for the contact zone-related “ramifications” of World Camp’s presence in Malawian villages. Put plainly, whatever “first impression” students form of their volunteer teachers within the first Morning Songs session is far and away dictated by volunteers’ “otherness” (e.g. volunteers’ physical appearance, assumed wealth, unorthodox entrance by bus) than by a lack of relevance evidenced in Morning Songs’ “corny” lyrics and choreography.
volunteers revealed to me during their interviews that Morning Songs were their favorite part of the camp day.

For many volunteers, Mornings Songs—with their call-and-response structure, participatory nature, and absence of social constriction—echo memories of similarly sung songs from summer and/or church camp during their childhoods. In Turino’s typology, participation in Morning Songs has iconic power: it imbues volunteers’ present with significance based on their resemblance to previous experiences. These connections with volunteers’ respective pasts—while rooted in individual experiences—at times had communicative power across volunteers’ current experiences: upon the first rehearsal of Morning Songs during Orientation, volunteers often reveal having learned similar (if not identical) songs during their experiences at summer camp. As other volunteers make these connections expressive bonds are formed both between volunteers’ past through the iconic significance memories have for them. Even for volunteers who don’t share an experience of camp music, the feeling of summer camp (or a similar nostalgic childhood memory) might be recalled all the same, and subsequently shared with fellow volunteers. In an aside, since returning from my time in the field I have had the opportunity to discuss my research with entry-level ethnomusicology students. To demonstrate the associative power of semiotics in this instance, I unapologetically led the class in one of the Morning Songs in the disorienting setting of a college classroom. Completely unbidden, student after student cited the nostalgia they experienced for summer camp or a similar childhood event for which our impromptu performance served as an icon.\textsuperscript{18} For these students and World Camp

\textsuperscript{18} Evident of an even deeper connection, one participant from the class suggested her experience with summer camp musical encounters as having been deeply affected by the role of African-American culture in the shaping of camp songs as a vibrant oral tradition, a sentiment deftly explored by Kyra Grant in her monograph \textit{The Games Black}
volunteers alike, iconic associations led to connections with the past as well as laying the groundwork for social cohesion with each other.

A semiotic analysis of Malawian students’ associations with Morning Songs—by virtue of my lack of access to students as informants—must be more circumspect. In Michelle Kisliuk’s *Seize the Dance* she helpfully warns against approaches that “depend on a scholar’s theorizing of internally coherent social-cultural systems” that “often do not fully integrate research experiences that might contradict coherency” (1998:146). Heeding this admonition, I am only positioned to make tentative points about iconic resonance on the part of students, the overwhelming majority of whom I never met personally. With that said, interviews with Field Staff members—many of whom grew up attending primary schools scarcely different from the ones World Camp visits—yielded valuable information insights, as did interviews with local Malawian school teachers. Much of the exposure Malawian students have to call-and-response musical forms comes from participation in church services and events, as well as school lessons that themselves integrate local musical strategies. Teachers at multiple schools I visited mentioned the use of music in the classroom as a strategy deployed throughout their tenure as educators, particularly when pertaining to lessons about hygiene and other subjects falling under the Life Skills curriculum (field notes, 6/3/10 and 7/14/10).

To be sure, students who experience Morning Songs as iconic of musical encounters in either church or school find many aspects in common: in addition to their call-and-response construction, Morning Songs seek to establish bonds of unity between participants, approach an egalitarianism of performance despite evident power dynamics, and create a non-normative performative space. These similarities not...
withstanding, Morning Songs also strike a demonstrative contrast with music in the
church and classroom inasmuch as they take place outside where community members
pass with frequency and compel choreography and bodily participation that subverts
conservative notions of corporeal acceptability. In studying Chewa agrarian and
cosmological calendars, some scholars have noted that the functioning body is drawn
upon by many in Chewa communities as a metaphor for weather and harvest patterns:
“Chewa social life is dominated by the rhythms of agricultural production, and their
orientation toward their world and their own physicality is shaped by those rhythms”
(Kaspin 1996:573). While such an analysis teeters close to the reductive essentialization
against which Kisliuk warns us, if Malawians students do, in fact, approach their bodies
in ways that invite connections to agriculture and agrarian tasks, Morning Songs
provide students a forum to exercise a new level of embodied self-determination in
light of the risks posed to agricultural and economic normalcy by the environmental
corns addressed in the World Camp classroom.

I can assert with much more confidence, however, that Morning Songs
unquestionably inspire a meaningful discursive space where the celebration and
performativity of bodies sets the stage for an exploration of corporeal themes in the
classroom. Though volunteers and students draw on different personal experiences
during the initial Morning Songs session, each subsequent session draws on the
previous morning as an indexical experience: with daily repetition, students and
volunteers revisit and reinforce social bonds created during the initial performance and
expounded upon each day in the classroom. At times, the prominence of this indexical
relationship between fellow students spills over into classroom with impromptu, repeat

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19 As was mentioned in the previous chapter, all the villages in the administrative
districts World Camp visits are Chewa-majority communities.
performances of songs from the morning. Volunteers regularly pointed to repeating Morning Songs in the classroom as a strategy for reviving their students’ attention and participation, particularly following lessons in which the curricular material is particularly foreign or challenging. Without the zany, egalitarian atmosphere created each morning by Morning Songs, volunteers’ efforts in the classroom are characterized by an absence of trust and openness among students—an atmosphere closer to the hierarchical social dynamics in a local Malawian classroom.

Lastly, the relationship between volunteers and their students epitomized by Morning Songs performances is particularly striking for the ways it compensates for the communicative dearth left by the language barrier between volunteers and students. Malawian students officially begin learning English in Standard 5, but their progress is largely dependent on the proficiency of their teachers, a significant variable that often depends on where they were trained and a school’s proximity to an urban center. Albeit with exceptions in cases of students with excellent English skills, World Camp heavily depends on Field Staff members to translate volunteers’ words both inside and outside the classroom. Dependence on Field Staff members as linguistic conduits can be a deeply contentious issue for World Camp, but the brunt of this discrepancy is often felt most acutely by volunteers seeking to establish personal relationships with their students only to find it impossible to accomplish absent a translator. Morning Songs’ emphasis on embodied rather than verbal participation offers a counterweight to this impediment. One volunteer, a proficient ballet dancer, forwarded each morning’s songs as her favorite part of the camp day for exactly this reason: citing her experience with dance as a form of communication, she experienced the same dialogic inter-
communicability with her students through movement (field notes, 6/24/10). Just as students communicate their personalities through spoken word, so too, for this volunteer, was embodied musical participation a space for personalized public expression. With this sentiment and others like it, volunteers readily acknowledged the role of Morning Songs in the contact zone to inspire their students.

Classroom Songs

Develop a group cheer or song and dance to go with the [group] name. Explain that the group will sing or chant often so that their friends, teachers, and families will know that they are a strong team. The group cheer is also a good way to get your students’ attention. Work with your translator to ensure that your students have created an original song... Leading the group in the creation of a group name and song requires the students to work as a team and reach their own conclusions -- two themes that should reoccur throughout the camp.  

After the conclusion of Morning Songs on the first day of camp, students in Standards 6, 7, and 8 are instructed to form lines according to both Standard and gender. Pre-assigned teaching pairs of volunteers and their Field Staff member are then introduced to a newly formed class of roughly twenty students, consisting—as much as is possible—of an equal number of male and female students. Classes set off to a corner of the field where they form a new, smaller circle and begin formal introductions.

Classroom Songs—my term for the “group song or cheer” addressed above in the curriculum—begin with the suggestion of a classroom name volunteered by students. In the event that more than one name is suggested, students cast a democratic vote for a favorite. Team names typically revolve around an animal—often an animal indigenous

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21 This language represents a curious break from how this section was described in the 2006 version of the curriculum I used as a volunteer: “Forcing the students to be creative in their group name and song requires the students to work as a team and reach their own conclusions—two themes that should reoccur repeatedly throughout the camp” (World Camp 2006:6).
to Malawi, though not always one that students have themselves seen. The most popular name throughout my time in the field was *kalulu* (rabbit or hare) (see DVD clip 6); other popular animals included *pusi* (monkey), *kambuku* (leopard), *mkango* (lion), and *njobvu* (elephant).\(^2^2\) Non-animal team names included references to national landmarks (e.g. Lake Malawi and Mt. Mulanje [see DVD clip 7]) and general themes of unity (e.g. “The Chain”). A final theme for classroom names evidenced in multiple schools was international football teams: pan-African favorites Bafana Bafana (South Africa) before their elimination and, later, World Cup champions Spain. The animals and landmarks that students choose are iconic of their country and region of the world even while—as a result of deforestation and climate change, topics in the World Camp curriculum—many students have never seen the animals they choose to represent them or have the means to travel to a site like Mt. Mulanje. World Camp anticipates the choice of these classroom names and volunteers often prompt students with a category (e.g. “Who here has a favorite animal?”) when faced with a reticent class. As the week unfolds and students become more exposed to the challenges facing Malawi at the national level, students are tacitly invited to draw the connection between the iconic salience of the animals and landmarks iconic of their country and the potential national upswing of behavior modification. This sentiment, paired with team-building exercises on this first and each subsequent morning, reify positive relationships among classmates and ascribe trust and cooperation at the level of the classroom, school, community, and nation.

The Classroom Song that accompanies this team name is cooperatively composed

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\(^2^2\) The *kalulu's* heralded place in Chewa folklore made it such a popular team name that volunteers averted confusion by encouraging students to add descriptors. At times, however, even this strategy induced confusion: one camp featured subsequent classroom presentations by the hares, the white hares, and the white, happy hares.
as a group immediately after deciding on a name. Volunteers suggest to their students that the lyrics of the song should include the team name in the context of a positive phrase (e.g. “Let’s go Clever Hares!”) but are instructed to insist that the song not merely rework the lyrics of an existing school or community song. By working together to free-compose a new work, students foreshadow the discussions to follow in class: though at times uncomfortable and slow moving, a premium is placed on students’ arriving at their own conclusions and being proud of the end product of their incisive collaboration. The musical structure of these songs is usually just a few seconds, strophically looped and placed against a clapped and/or danced rhythm. In many cases students are arranged in a circle when these songs are composed or initially rehearsed, and—in subsequent performances—the circle formed coheres once more. In a similar manner to Morning Songs, all students participate equally in Classroom Songs, but with the significant caveat that students—not volunteers—are the leaders. Classroom Songs—both the content and the conversations among students that lead to their creation—are exclusively in Chichewa, prohibiting volunteers from offering even well-meaning critiques and suggestions. To an extent, the maneuver by students to re-engage the call-and-response forms presented in Morning Songs and imbue them with their own creative potential during Classroom Songs evidences the autoethnography Pratt suggests is endemic to the contact zone. In sum, these songs represent a sung identity for each classroom group that mirrors the ways traditional music is used—not just in Malawi but, as Gregory Barz points out, throughout Sub-Saharan Africa—to

23 While in theory Classroom Songs are meant to be original works, in practice they can deviate from this ideal: coordinators—traversing hundreds of kilometers over two summer sessions—heard plenty of instances when song tunes were replicated or recycled, often re-worded from songs heard on the radio or in school. At times this can be the result of a volunteer unwilling to lose precious momentum in their early minutes with a classroom of new students, and at others a Field Staff member might not recognize the tune’s origin as non-improvisatory.
“express both interdependence and integration within communities” (Barz 2004:16).

Despite Classroom Songs’ importance, this second iteration of music-making in the World Camp model plays a more understated role than either Morning Songs and Presentations, a relationship that is mirrored in this analysis. Unlike Morning Songs, Classroom Songs constitute a much smaller fraction of World Camp’s overall camp schedule and are shared solely amongst distinct classroom groups rather than the entire camp. Unlike Presentations they are not imbued with explicit communicative salience by volunteers, nor are they intentionally shared with the broader community as demonstrative or representative of World Camp’s residency at the school. They are, however, rich for analysis from both a pedagogical and sociological standpoint if only for the ways Classroom Songs shape volunteers’ perceptions of endemic musicality among their students and—more broadly—those students’ communities. Classroom
Songs are routinely drawn upon by volunteers in the classroom itself—at times to reengage students after a slew of taught lessons and even to shore up group cohesion in anticipation of an afternoon game or sport. During nightly evaluations over dinner at the World Camp house, volunteers exchange teaching tips that have proven effective in the classroom: music—at times Classroom Songs specifically, in others songs that resemble them in form and effect—is routinely forwarded as a tool for filling lulls in the day or periods of silence if a teaching pair’s Field Staff member is temporarily out of the room.24

Conclusion: Malawian Music and the Inspired Gaze

During one of World Camp’s outreach projects held the day following a residency at a community’s school, I witnessed a lengthy conversation in which volunteers and community members—many of whom appeared well into their fifties—discussed at length (through a translator) the various roles of music and dance in Chewa community life. Having recently written an academic paper about the Chewa of Malawi, I came away from the conversation feeling much of my research vindicated: my interpretation of the discussion suggested that while some dances deployed in cosmologically sacrosanct ceremonies remained unchanged,25 others have been subject to different performance practice in living memory and continue to be transformed with shifting identities that the Chewa themselves experience. However, based on volunteers reactions’ to the same discussion I was left thinking we were in different rooms: once aboard the bus back to Lilongwe, several of the volunteers present for the discussion

24 Classroom Songs were also regularly sung—as in the case of DVD clip 8—from the school grounds and into the physical classroom itself.
25 Chief among these dances is the nyau or gule wankulu, a version of which is discussed in Chapter 3.
shared loudly and adamantly about how struck they were by how much singing and
dancing everyone in the village seemed to do, as if at the drop of a hat or as an
alternative to twiddling one’s thumbs.

A similar sentiment was expressed in several interviews with volunteers: one
wondered aloud to me, presumably with longing inflection, how differently the United
States public school system might function if American children were as gifted as
Malawians at the apparently spontaneous concertizing she witnessed as a volunteer
(field notes, 6/24/10). Despite any opinions one might have on the comparative
musicality of American schoolchildren, sentiments like these about Malawians—
however well-meaning—underscore a certain problematic mentality among volunteers
concerning the musical abilities of the students they teach. Such a mentality posits that
Malawians (or, more generally, Africans) are unfailingly musically gifted; that all
members of communities participate equally and positively to musical performance and
the oral continuation of musical traditions; and finally—albeit veiled—that foreigners
(or, more specifically, Americans) stand to learn something from this noble,
enchantingly simple mode of “doing” music (or, more generally, living life). In falling
prey to this gaze World Camp volunteers are not alone: Bill Clinton, when describing
his fondness for Malawi, states:

People ask me, “why do you love it so much there?” and I always say it’s
because they have the highest percentage of people—I believe anywhere on
earth—who wake up every day with a song in their heart. They sing through
their pain and their need and the madness of people around them. It’s almost
like an engrained wisdom of more than a hundred thousand years. (Becker and
Rissman 2008)

While deconstructing such a gaze is the subject for a different paper, I will address
a few salient points to conclude this chapter. First, there is the inconvenient truth that
such an assertion is simply inaccurate: I raised the topic in three separate discussions
with host communities’ local teachers and each time I was assured that students—like volunteers might expect from their American counterparts—demonstrate different levels of aptitude for musical skills, and, as such, gravitate to musical participation at wildly varying degrees. Just such an assertion was evidenced by the discussion with community members mentioned above: there, too, did Malawians assert that different roles in traditional Chewa dances are determined by rites of passage associated with the elite mastery of skills by a select, chosen few. Second, adhering to such a view is at deleterious odds with World Camp’s message—to say nothing of its own problematic nature—that there are drastic changes to be made in Malawi’s communities. Volunteers exhibit acute cognitive dissonance when on the one hand they assert that they are present to make lasting, needed change while on the other hand they are longing for a simplicity and humility of existence—often thinly-romanticized versions of poverty and want—embodied by the communities they visit. Such double thinking would be easy to expose if it weren’t even easier to be trapped by: World Camp—through its colorful, musical website—and the Malawian Ministry of Tourism—through a richly iconic marketing campaign that emphasizes the unchanging happiness of Malawians’ demeanor—both straddle the line between advocating for systemic change while remaining deeply dependent on a version of Malawi and Malawians that is provincial, egalitarian, and statically optimistic.

But in spite of the gaze’s blatant inconsistencies—both its demonstrable dishonesty and internal incoherence—it persists due to the inspiration it bequeaths to those who employ it. One illuminating explanation is offered by a semiotic analysis: World Camp volunteers—when experiencing Classroom Songs and other iterations of traditional music—have rich aesthetic experiences that reify social bonds with their fellow volunteers as well as with their students. These experiences often take place in
scenarios—as Turino suggests—of sensual perception, feeling, physical reaction, and symbolic thought: physical exhaustion born of a hectic schedule, aural sensitivity at hearing emotive music, and emotional fulfillment stemming from new friendships and relationships, all of them predictable byproducts of the contact zone. Writing in my diary as a volunteer, I experienced a nearly identical swath of emotions:

These kids don’t know much anything else other their own personalities and ways of living. Just like so much of my time here, they made me aware of how I’m choosing, not only to spend my time, but even how to spend my thoughts. How much of my life do I consider to be real, to be genuine, after seeing the richness of lives that have so little? (Field notes, 1/17/07)

Experiences like the one in whose shadow I wrote the above passage are revisited by volunteers as indices each time they look at pictures, chat with friends, or—in my case—listen to recordings from their time in Malawi. Through experiencing indices like these the relationship between volunteers and music’s inspirational potential is reinvigorated, and a nostalgia materializes for the circumstances that brought about their experience—even (and sometimes especially) scenes of poverty and postulated ethics of endemic, egalitarian musicality. In positing this analysis I am not suggesting of course that volunteers would rather systems of inequality be perpetuated to therefore enable their inspirational connection with musical and other encounters in Malawi. Instead, I suggest that the inspirational potential of music in the World Camp model for volunteers is a powerful force that—especially in the context of the contact zone—can at invite emotional, aesthetically informed responses rather than intellectually coherent.

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26 And, specifically, pictures on Facebook: in the four intervening years since the instance of my own web-based recruitment, World Camp’s preponderance on the social networking site has only increased. In addition to serving as a recruiting platform as well as a way for volunteers to maintain friendships with Field Staff, repatriated volunteers relentless utilize Facebook as a medium for publicizing their time abroad: over ninety percent of volunteers from my time in the field changed their profile picture to a rural Malawian scene, often incorporating as many schoolchildren as can fit in a frame.
ones. When considered in tandem with the invaluable role musical strategies play in World Camp’s cultural project, the inspired gaze brought about by Malawians’ musical output erects a dialectical relationship between music for inspiration—music deployed to perform the prescriptive function of harboring mutual social trust—and music as inspiration—music considered by volunteers and other dominant cultural forces in the contact zone to be indicative of an authentic, pure, yet elusive Malawi.
Chapter 3

Social Change, Musical Performativity, and Activist Ethnomusicologies

In this final chapter I continue my analysis of World Camp’s musical strategies, focusing specifically on the third iteration of music-making in the World Camp model, the Presentations that conclude each camp. The chapter unfolds in two parts. In the first section and through a series of close analyses of specific performances, I highlight how performative rhetorical strategies on the part of Malawian students foreshadow the possibility for social change in their communities, change not only made possible by World Camp in the present but change also accessible to communities following World Camp’s departure. Throughout my discussion I continue to draw on the analytical tools of Pratt and Turino to contextualize and problematize World Camp’s curricular and musical strategies. To these theorists’ contributions I also introduce the work of scholars working in performance theory as an avenue for accessing these end-of-camp performances’ transformational potential. Following my discussion of Presentations, the second half of this chapter takes a step back and considers World Camp’s musical reality (as well as my positionality as a researcher within it) in light of three emergent

27 In this chapter I am intentional about my choice to capitalize “Presentations.” A capitalized version of the term refers to the prescribed event as it appears in World Camp curriculum. A lowercase version refers to a specific presented event e.g. a song or drama, or a unique collection of said events.
sub-fields within ethnomusicology that are concerned with the study of social and societal change through—and often in—music. These sub-fields are medical, evangelical, and applied ethnomusicology, and I collectively label them “activist” ethnomusicologies for—among other reasons—the conscious choice made by their respective practitioners to invest in musical encounters that enable and foster change. After offering brief overviews, I address the degree to which—based on the analysis particularized by this study—World Camp’s praxis could be considered an example of each. In the final pages I summarize the findings of the study and offer conclusions about the effect and affect of World Camp’s musical interventions.

Both halves of this chapter draw on—in various permutations—the third theme in the archetype: change. As is the case with all NGOs operating in some capacity in Malawi, World Camp’s ultimate mission is to bring about social change in the communities with which it partners, a sentiment made evident by its mission statement:

World Camp enriches the lives of children in disadvantaged communities worldwide. World Camp builds self-worth and encourages community pride by raising awareness about locally challenging issues. World Camp aids in every community’s mission to have happy, educated children with aspirations for the future. (World Camp 2011)

The “change” which World Camp seeks to bring about can be articulated at a number of levels—from overt behavioral changes like increased condom use and parity in the sexual decision-making process to subtle ideological shifts such as a student renewing his or her sense of place as an interconnected citizen at the national and global levels.

One of the few standard metrics World Camp institutes is through the seemingly innocuous Curriculum Effectiveness Quiz, identical copies of which are administered to

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28 Throughout this essay I use “activist” as a qualifier for the style of ethnomusicology undertaken by practitioners in these three sub-fields. Some scholars, by its definition, equate “applied ethnomusicology” with “activist ethnomusicology,” but I use the latter term here as a descriptive, umbrella classification inclusive of all three of the sub-fields I discuss as opposed to a concrete taxonomic category.
students before any aspect of the curriculum is taught and after the entire curriculum is completed. In these examples, change, at least theoretically, is the end product of the first two elements of the archetype: education and inspiration. But while education and—to an extent—inspiration are visible in the contact zone, change is much more elusive, particularly from World Camp’s limited, time-constrained vantage point. Some changes are evidenced at the national level—in 2010 Malawi’s AIDS-related mortality rate fell to its lowest in a decade—and another up-and-coming initiative in which World Camp returns to forty different schools at three year intervals would begin to gauge retention of curricular concepts on a local level. Still, the structure of the program itself precludes volunteers from seeing classifiable, transformational change across their series of four-day residences.

Figure 3.1 – A crowd gathers for Presentations. (photo by the author)

If we are to take Morning Songs and Classroom Songs as demonstrative of the affective power of music in the World Camp model, the third iteration of music-making—Presentations—continues this trend. As detailed in Chapter 1, public
performance has played a central though mutable role in Malawian civic life following the advent of multipartyism—at times as a platform to voice identity and loyalty, but in many others as a discursive space where powerful political interests can manipulate or appropriate the public stage. In Chewa communities, regular public performances by traditional dancers, chiefs, and witch doctors index folkloric legacies and reify ethnic bonds: they are potent “teachable” spaces—like school classrooms and churches—where messages about how and where to belong are ceded broad authority and exposure. Not surprisingly, music and dance play a central communicative role in these spaces, both by bounding a performance’s beginning and end as well as inducing participation through rhythmic and melodic flow. In the first half of this chapter, I posit the presentations that conclude each camp as following in this performative tradition, though with one significant caveat: while these performances occupy a demarcated space where rhetorical strategies and semiotic salience abound, they also fall squarely in the domain of the contact zone where novel and unfamiliar relationships enable new possibilities for social change.

Presentations

OBJECTIVE: To engage students in a creative way to share what they have learned. Students can create drama, dance, song, a poem, or anything else they can think of to effectively teach others about their topic . . . Everyone must participate in the creation and performance of the presentation, and presentations must be original.²⁹ (World Camp 2010:88)

²⁹ Out of preference for a performance-based theoretical methodology, this chapter’s analysis largely elides a discussion of music (or drama) as text, focusing instead on the sung or spoken text’s effective or affective ramifications for audience members and communities. The hybridized musical genre evidenced in Presentations—one that weds Malawian folk music idioms with medical and behavioral concepts from World Camp’s curriculum—is rich for a literary-based analysis all its own. For more on the politics of hybridized musics, see my colleague Rachel Colwell’s compelling treatment of Wolfgang Holzinger’s taxonomy for classifying musical hybridity (Holzinger 2002:273 in Colwell 2010:36).
Near the conclusion of the camp’s fourth day, volunteers and their classes converge for what is—in effect—World Camp’s closing assembly. Volunteers, Malawian students, World Camp coordinators, local Malawian teachers, and school officials gather together in an available open space—at times the same field or school grounds where Morning Songs take place, but more often in an area closer to the school’s boundary with the rest of the community. In some cases—particularly in villages where volunteers spend one evening overnight with village families—local leaders will arrange for a church or other community center to be used. In electing to use these spaces, chiefs and school officials promote World Camp to a position of authority and status often reserved for religious or political dignitaries while simultaneously lending the attention-grabbing visitors visibility that allows inquisitive community members to get a closer look. Co-occurrences of these spaces with public presentations index them as sites of communicative or discursive salience. Throughout the camp as volunteers help their students to prepare their performances, World Camp coordinators set off with a local teacher to pay visits to villagers in hopes of generating interest in and subsequent attendance at the end-of-camp community gathering. Although the term associated with this gathering—“Presentations” as referred to in the World Camp lexicon—suggests a simple series of performances, this culminating moment of World Camp’s outreach initiative serves a complex, heterogeneous role: in addition to formally concluding World Camp’s program of activities, Presentations constitute World Camp’s only public foray into the wider village community. Simply put, they serve as the curricular, musical, and cultural apotheosis of the contact zone scenario.
The public, visible nature of these presentations is essential to their communicative potential. Students, separated into classroom groups on the first day, are reunited with classmates and cohorts who may not have been in their classes during World Camp’s stay. Much in the same way, Malawian teachers and their students gather in the same place after four days of atypical teaching and learning scenarios—Malawian students having been in classrooms where horizontal, symmetrical relationships are fostered and encouraged, and Malawian teachers having been in their own classroom where they assume a role normally reserved for their students. Community members, local officials, and village chiefs in attendance may arrive expecting to be introduced to or placed in conversation with the azungu visiting the village. Instead, onlookers encounter a series of musical performances in which the young students of their village are featured front and center not only as discursive participants but also as bearers of consequential messages with profound social
ramifications. It is important to point out, however, that while World Camp members play an understated public role in these gatherings, the significance of their presence and influence should not be overlooked. The dialectic shift evident in these performances—one in which students address adults and the wider community with a newfound authority or voice—is itself a byproduct of the contact zone. Just as certain curricular content ordinarily labeled taboo or inaccessible is teachable in a World Camp classroom, so too are newfound social dynamics made possible in a World Camp presentation with the fundamental change introduced of Malawians, not volunteers, being the primary communicators.

Unlike Morning Songs where the same five numbers are reiterated throughout the summer or Classroom Songs where simple, single-lined phrases are repeated again and again, Presentations are thoughtfully crafted, often through-composed songs or dramas. Volunteers devote close to an hour throughout the four-day arc to preparation for the event, at times bringing small props or costumes from the World Camp house to visually augment what unfolds “on stage.” To invoke classic anthropological language, while a study of Morning and Classroom Songs can be—to an extent—prescriptive, an analysis of Presentations—given the multifarious nature of the music and drama I saw throughout the summer—must be descriptive: it must—in the words of Deborah Wong—“show rather than tell” (Wong 2008:79). In what follows, I offer four specific examples of presentations I witnessed in the field and follow each with a description and analysis, extrapolating larger themes whenever possible. In concluding the primary portion of this chapter I summarize from my analysis trends and themes made evident in Presentations by a performance-based approach.
Example 1

Trees are good because they give us good fresh air
If we cut trees, we must re-plant them!
Listen, Chiefs: You must remember that trees are good
If we cut trees, we must re-plant them!
Listen, parents: You must remember that trees are good
If we cut trees, we must re-plant them!

(DVD clip 9)\(^{30}\)

As discussed in Chapter 1, the World Camp curriculum encourages volunteers to
develop the types of personal, inter-communicable relationships that are rarely a
feature of teacher-students dynamics in rural Malawian settings. Part of this
transformed teacher-student relationship in the World Camp context is due to the
smaller class sizes volunteers teach, and in many cases the physical landscape of the
classroom is altered so that volunteers and their students form a circle rather than
students segregating to the front and back of the classroom according to gender, as is
the norm. I should point out here that gender heterogeneity among students is a
particularly vital attribute of an effective World Camp classroom: since many
unintended HIV infections are the result of inequity in the decision-making process
about how and when to have sex, volunteers seek to establish a classroom space where
gender equity is upheld as essential. Conceived within Pratt’s framework, the
asymmetrical relationship between volunteers and students is essential: without the
unbridled courtesy paid to volunteers by their Malawian host communities, the non-
normative teaching styles that World Camp practices would be inaccessible. Ironically,
it is volunteers’ privilege as (usually) white American foreigners, that ultimately allows
for symmetrical relationships in the classroom to emerge.

\(^{30}\)This musical example actually contains two parts: first a poem then followed by the
song the lyrics of which appear here. Transcriptions of both parts appear in Appendix
B.
These sociological phenomena are evident in the performance presented in Example 1. Students and volunteers perform together as equals, with students taking the lead as instrumentalists while volunteers are backgrounded as ensemble members. Volunteers in this example sing along in Chichewa and follow—to the best of their abilities, at least—the choreography established by student leaders. In doing so they lend credence to students’ message even as they are unaware of the literal words they are saying. Though somewhat segregated by gender, male and female students perform in close proximity to one another and in rhythmic and tonal unison—a theme established in the classroom through seating and participation strategies and expounded upon in Empowerment sessions as groups of male and female students learn about the invaluable roles both genders—and especially women—play. The strophic musical form of this piece is straightforward and uncomplicated, imbuing the content of the sung lyrics with optimal communicative potential: as the verses unfold, the vital message regarding the threat of deforestation is conveyed to additional subsections of the audience.

If classrooms in the World Camp model become dynamic discursive spaces where students are empowered to discuss and debate themes and issues ordinarily considered taboo, the performance space exhibited here perpetuates expanded transformations in the communicative sphere. In most of the villages World Camp visited, I encountered through my own time in the classroom attitudes among students that demonstrate fixed, circumscribed roles for young people in rural Malawian culture. Young men often apprentice their fathers or male elders in helming the generation of income and participating in local and municipal forms of government while girls apprentice women in learning the tasks of house keeping, food preparation, and child rearing. As opposed to population centers like Lilongwe, rural communities afford
comparatively little space for subverting these roles and endeavoring new strategies of income generation. By no means is such a regime of fixed responsibility wholly or ultimately suppressive: adherence to societal expectations perpetuates ethnic and family bonds and buttresses social organization where economic stabilizers—the trust funds, inheritances, and social security accounts that stabilize volunteers' financial networks—are often inconsistent or nonexistent. But when financial and cultural survival depends on discursive channels where elders communicate to youth in direct, imperative commands, the fixed rigidity of these channels spills over into the social realm.

Most significant about this example, then, is how the symmetrical discursive space engendered in the classroom reappears here as students implore both parents and village chiefs to listen carefully to their message about deforestation. Kisliuk and others working in the field of Performance Theory point to performances as examples of "enacted culture" where "interaction and meanings of (a given) performance" point to the intentionality and communicative authority of performers (Kisliuk 1998:12). Ruth Stone, in summarizing Performance Theory’s contribution to Ethnomusicology, posits that “the context of creating the text,” or—in my case—the song/drama, “gains attention because artistic performance is anchored in the particularity of its creation,” adding later, “Performance Theory addresses issues of power that are evident in strategies of the various performers” (Stone 2008:139-140). These perspectives are invaluable in assessing the performative nature of World Camp presentations. By addressing their elders and parents directly, students subvert and transform a politics

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31 Michael Kumwenda, a member of World Camp’s Board of Trustees, put it to me thusly: “In Malawi, many people note our meager economy and suggest we don’t have family insurance policies. In fact, Malawians practice the oldest insurance policy around: having as many children as possible” (field notes, 5/25/10).
of communication where young people follow—rather than issue—orders. Whether students *knowingly* engender this fundamental change is ultimately secondary: a performance-based analysis stresses the intentionality of preparation by performers and interpretation by audience members—what might be termed an intentionality of affect—rather than the intentionality of effect rooted in a text’s literal specificity. To employ one Pratt’s strategies, the transculturation process evident here by which students integrate symmetrical relationships into autochthonous cultural settings is—by virtue of the creative latitude afforded in the presentation’s preparation—the creative property of the students, whether or not it is considered consciously as such.

**Example 2**

AIDS is a dangerous disease: if you’re not careful you will be wiped out!  
(Leader:) If you’re not careful, boys and girls, you will perish!  
Men and women, let’s protect ourselves from the disease.  
The best means of protection is abstinence.  
(DVD clip 10)

While the bulk of World Camp volunteers work with students, two volunteers are designated each week to work instead with local teachers. While students are in classes, the volunteers address the curriculum’s constituent parts with teachers, at times acting out the lessons in simulated classroom scenarios, and in others opening the floor for general discussion about teaching pedagogy. Like the relationship between volunteers and students, the social dynamics of the teachers’ meetings are intended to be a free exchange of ideas with a premium placed on openness and honesty. But unlike the dynamic in a regular World Camp classroom, volunteers are typically made uneasy by the task of speaking with veteran teachers while they themselves may have extremely limited teaching experience. This process was particularly harrowing for volunteers assigned to the Teacher Workshop during the first camp of a session: many
indicated a sense of frustration that they were partially misled by World Camp’s promotion apparatus since the role of working with local teachers is publicized far less overtly than working with children. In this iterate of the contact zone, volunteers’ privilege is set in opposition to their hosts’ viable teaching experience. In the case of particularly passionate Malawian teachers, volunteers—through a form of autoethnography on behalf of their hosts—instead themselves become the students.

During Presentations, teachers also perform a song or drama—and in some cases they take up the task with as much or more vigor than classrooms of students. Despite their exposure to unfamiliar and atypical topics in the World Camp classroom, students occasionally resume a level of discomfort when it comes to speaking about curricular content in a public way. As a result, the lyrical content of some students’ presentations can at times be muted or unspecific, thus circumscribing their educational value for audience members. Left to fester, this discrepancy between World Camp classroom and public sphere social dynamics can blunt any transformational effect World Camp’s presence brings about. In the case of teachers’ presentations, however, teachers’ social standing in the community goes unaffected regardless of the explicitness of their presentation’s content. As such, the headmaster in this example exclaims to his students “the best means of protection is abstinence.” Though his dictum is unexpected (and consequently met with squeals of surprise), the discursive space he enjoys as a teacher remains untarnished: unlike students who might be teased or ostracized for choosing to present on volatile topics, teachers—which they might raise a few eyebrows—do not suffer socially. As a means of comparison, in Example 1 the discursive relationship between students and volunteers extends from the classroom to

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32 In one memorable example, a teachers group’s presentation lasted close to forty minutes, eclipsing in length the combined duration of all the student presentations that came before it.
the performance space and in doing so empowers students to explore performative symmetrical relationships with their elders and social superiors. By contrast, in Example 2 the discursive relationship between students and their local teachers is upheld e.g. teachers teaching, students learning, but the content and explicitness of the discourse is altered. Put another way, in Example 1, volunteers work to convince students that new, symmetrical relationships are possible. In Example 2, local teachers indicate through their presentation that new topics, too, are possible.

As Stone reminds us, a performance-based analysis hinges consequentially on the relationship between performer and audience member: “performance enhances experience, bringing a great intensity of communication between performer and audience” (2008:137). In considering the musical content of these presentations, Turino offers yet another framework for assessing change or transformation. Rather than partitioning along genre and sub-genre lines, he instead suggests thinking about music production across four artistic “fields.” Two of these fields—participatory music and presentational music—figure in my analysis here. According to Turino, “Participatory events are founded on an ethos that holds that everyone present can, and in fact should participate. Such events are framed as interactive social occasions,” whereas the field of presentational music is epitomized by the wall erected between those doing the music and an audience of observers:

The goals of presentational musicians go beyond (the “togetherness” of presentational aesthetics) to fashioning music for nonparticipating audiences, and this goal generates a variety of different values, practices, and style features that distinguish the participatory and presentational fields. (2008:52)

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33 The two fields marginalized for my purposes here are “high fidelity” and “studio audio art,” both of which trade on “cosmopolitans’ . . . experience with musical sound through audio and video recordings” (Turino 2008:67).
Performers and audience members judge the success a presentational performance by the extent to which the audience’s attention is maintained. As a result, rehearsals are goal-oriented, incentive-driven, and work toward a performance as the culmination of the music-making arc. The differences between the two musical fields, as Turino points out, can often be understood by “considering the transformation of a participatory tradition into a presentational one” (2008:59).\(^{34}\)

Using Turino’s fields as a guide, one can plainly see the transformation that takes place between Classroom Songs and Presentations. While both draw on various rural Malawian folk\(^{35}\) music idioms such as call-and-response forms, strophic structure, rhythmic accompaniment in the form of handclaps and embodied choreography, Classroom Songs (and Morning Songs) are wholly participatory musical events whereas Presentations take up the task of maintaining the audience’s attention. The onus of music in the presentational field lies with the performers to compel the audience to listen actively and attentively. In Example 2, the attention of the audience is clearly upheld: the novelty of Malawian teachers singing lyrics about sex in a public setting in front of their students is more than sufficiently compelling to maintain the attention of the audience—an attention confirmed here by whoops and giggles from the crowd of students. In other instances, student presentations are upended by poor audience

\(^{34}\) Turino offers in his text the example of old-time string bands evolving into the bluegrass genre, a highly presentational musical tradition.

\(^{35}\) Given its conflicted ethnomusicological past, I use this term gingerly. Here and elsewhere in this paper I define folk music traditions simply as ones that are shared in—but are not limited to—vernacular contexts, either through participation or performance. When describing Malawian folk music, church music; initiation, fertility, and agricultural musics from Chewa and other ethnic communities (see Kubik 1987:47); and commoditized music that resonates in a village context all play salient roles in a composite definition.
reception, and their communicative salience is lost. Writing about this task, folklorist Richard Bauman points to “semiotic structures, through metapoetics, (that) allow performers to imaginatively comment upon themselves and provide cultural self-definition” (Bauman 1984[1977]:29 in Stone 2008:137). Writing from a Western art music tradition, Leonard Meyer uses the term “syntax” to describe an audience’s structural expectations within a work (Meyer 1999:207), and the degree to which a work follows or breaks with syntactical structures determines its efficacy as a presentational form. Turino, Bauman, and Meyer each offer perspectives about how producers of presentational art forms make their works engaging and attractive to an audience. In the final two examples from Presentations, I discuss two student dramas that engage in their own semiotic processes while simultaneously erecting discursive space for social change.

Examples 3 and 4

In debating the ultimate social impact of World Camp’s intervention, one must inquire about the extent to which the information conveyed in the classroom is transculturated into everyday communal life in the form of shifting attitudes, behavior change, and the content of run-of-the-mill discussions. As mentioned near the outset of this chapter, volunteers’ (any my) limited perspective—a mere four-day-long window into the happenings of village life under extremely atypical circumstances—precludes a sensibly circumspect analysis from making any incontrovertible claims: my field

36 In still other cases, volunteers leading the class will alter the presentational effect of a song in ways that only compel the attention of volunteers in the audience. I have included one particularly infamous example in which volunteers incorporate dance moves from Beyonce’s “Single Ladies” into their presentation (DVD clip 13).

37 These dramas’ complete translations—too lengthy and intricate to be included in-text—are found in Appendix B.
experience was—as all are—imperfect, thus yielding imperfect data that posit imperfect conclusions. Mindful of these shortcomings, I contend that a close, performance-based analysis of the presentations I have selected—and particularly the enacted dramas in Examples 3 and 4—do illuminate radically different modes and terms of communication among various collectivities within a rural Malawian setting. Whereas music—particularly in the case of presentations that hew very close to preformed musical structures and formulaic lyric patterns—might be considered “safe” choices on the part of students, dramas reveal an intentionality of expression that is uniquely focused. In discussing presentational music, Turino posits that virtuosic performances serve to maintain audience attention rather than merely provide contrast with less-skilled performers as they do in participatory events (2008:47-49), and there are clear instances of dramaturgical virtuosity in these examples.

Both of these examples feature students engaging with and—to some extent—subverting traditional structures of power within rural communities. In Example 3 (DVD clip 11), a student is teased and ostracized by her classmates because of her perceived HIV-status. The student’s teacher instructs her to visit the village chief to seek advice, but instead of doling out a litany of solutions to her problem, the chief instead accompanies the girl to a female HIV/AIDS counselor. The chief subsequently asks the counselor to appear before the girl’s class where the counselor publicly discusses common misconceptions about HIV/AIDS while the class—including the chief—looks on attentively. When the girl’s teacher objects to the factual basis of the counselor’s message, the counselor leads by example by embracing the ostracized student. In Example 4 (DVD clip 12), the second through fourth scenes depict concerned villagers seeking advice from a witch doctor (or traditional healer). The first group of three men seeks treatment for malaria, and the characters in Scenes 3 and 4 seek to get their blood
tested for HIV. In each case, the witch doctor approaches the task of diagnosis with great ostentation, taking careful pains to beat away evil spirits with his flywhisk and guarding his process with the utmost secrecy. At the same time, his answers are often cryptic and inconsistent, at times taking on a slapstick quality, and he meanwhile rebuffs any questioning of his authority, at one point threatening a dissenter with the same evil spirits over which the witch doctor himself appears to have scarce compulsion. Overall he seems either willfully ignorant of or totally oblivious to the dangers posed by the medicine he practices: when woman objects to his reusing a razor blade to treat her, he simply answers that this is a sure sign of his antidote’s efficacy.

I have included these examples in tandem because they both offer imaginative interpretations of the role of rural power structures that exist beyond the school grounds. For rural Chewa communities, chiefs and the network of village headmen command nearly complete authority in local matters. Though the Chewa—like countless other ethnic groups in the region—are matrilineal, administrative and logistical power remains the domain of a few select males who are demarcated at birth and imbued with responsibility from an early age. This authority permeates to the highest levels of social organization: is it said that the Traditional Authority—an unelected representative of the Chewa in Malawi—has the President’s ear on a number of issues, totally bypassing a multiparty, democratically-elected parliament. With that said, democratic reforms and mass communication have begun to transform Malawian political society in the past two decades—leaving the role of chiefs somewhat truncated. Feminist critiques of traditional, rural power structures are particular provocative:

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38 As mentioned in Chapter 1, Hastings Banda was never seen in public without such a flywhisk. As a result, the artifact has evolved to not only index the practice of traditional medicine generally, but also as a nod to the former president and the nation’s ambivalent relationship with his rule.
reform movements in opposition to initiation and cleansing rituals—still in wide use in many rural areas—have gathered steam with the emergence of prominent female political leaders like Vice President Joyce Banda. Traditional medicine, however, remains less tainted by these criticisms, in part because of these traditions’ secrecy and also due to emergent initiatives seeking to integrate “the application of local herbs and traditional medicines” into syncretic regimes of locally relevant healthcare (Barz 2006:3).

Distilled in debates about issues like the utility of traditional medicine is a broader dialectic that places social cohesion and organization in opposition with the oppressive byproducts of these hegemonic structures, byproducts that often impede an effective response to the epidemic.

Both of these examples suggest and advocate transformations in rural hegemonic structures, but the outcomes of each set of societal changes are strikingly divergent. In Example 3, the teacher suggests that the girl suspected of having an HIV positive status seek out the chief, thereby following the calcified protocol for the airing of grievances. The profound transformation comes when the chief defers to an HIV counselor, supposedly one operating from a Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) Center. The chief utilizes his cultural capital to accrue interest and investment from the community through inviting them to his house, but upon their arrival he relinquishes his soapbox to a biomedical authority, ultimately lending her his unquestioned status in the process. When the counselor’s expertise is challenged by another local authority—in this case the very teacher that alerted the chief in the first place—the counselor stands her ground and convinces the teacher of the counselor’s factual rectitude. In this

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39 Specific criticisms have narrowed in on female circumcision and incidences of ritualistic cleansing through nonconsensual, unprotected sex with older, unfamiliar men as examples of highly problematic ethnic tropes that perpetuate the spread of HIV as well as further marginalize women.

40 No relation to the aforementioned Hastings Kamuzu Banda.
example, hegemonic channels of rural communication are largely upheld: it through the chief’s permission that the counselor is granted the discursive space to make her claims, and the teacher is likely made to see the error in her ways in part because of the embodied example of the counselor, but also certainly due to the chief’s tacit endorsement of the counselor’s point of view. For those looking for a way forward that utilizes the communicative mettle of rural societies to combat misinformation and stigmatization, these students’ presentation presents a compelling case study.

In a marked contrast, Example 4 presents a portrait of traditional power that is deeply flawed and anathema to scaling back the advance of the virus. In the second, third, and fourth scenes, the witch doctor character strikes the attentive audience member as microcosmic of the deleterious role traditional cultural figures are capable of playing. The issue at hand is not the witch doctor’s authority per se: the teacher in Example 3 refers her student to the chief much in the same way residents in this example here seek out the witch doctor for counsel and advice. The difference is encapsulated in each figure’s response: whereas the chief swiftly and rightfully acknowledges where he may be vulnerable as a vested authority, the witch doctor ignores any questioning of his judgment, choosing instead to adhere to his version of the facts no matter the evidence to contrary. The acute (some might say virtuosic) skill of the student playing the witch doctor is essential to the communicative characterization taking place: as audience members laugh at his deadpan impression, they are also free—unique to the context of this performance—to laugh at the seemingly preposterous nature of the witch doctor’s arguments. The audience members laughing the loudest are students: well-versed from their time in the classroom on the issues at hand, the performance indexes curricular material still fresh in their minds and invites connections that reach past the classroom into the socioaesthetics of village life. But
while there is much humor in this presentation, that facts presented by the character’s depiction are chillingly accurate: throughout my time in the field there constantly appeared advertisements in local newspapers and online claiming to have found a cure for AIDS using techniques rooted in traditional medicine. Just as laughter in the case of headmaster’s admonition in Example 2 reveals deep truths about the normative relationship between students and teachers, so here does laughter at the witch doctor underscore the apparent irreconcilability of some static traditional views.

As evidenced by this analysis, the social and discursive politics wrapped up in each student- or teacher-prepared presentation are multifarious and dense. While I selected for this chapter four particularly fertile examples, I witnessed and documented close to seventy different presentations over the course of my time in the field, the majority of which are as laden with richly presentational semiology as those discussed here. While remaining mindful here of the pitfall of positions that verge on the prescriptive, I believe there are certain conclusions one can draw about Presentations generally. First, their performative nature—that is, the dialectic exchange they erect between performer and audience—imbues Presentations with a communicative power that harnesses the vital role that music performance plays in broader rural Malawian culture and fuses it to curricular messages and medical information with profound social and economic consequences. Though Morning Songs and Classroom Songs engender themes of togetherness and trust, Presentations reach beyond the here and now by conveying expectations, stipulations, and conversations for the future. Second, they represent a broad and diverse spectrum of attitudes, messages, and themes that—while rooted in World Camp topics and curricular motifs—take on the creative identity of the students who package them for public consumption. This process of transculturation individualizes and specializes stock material from World Camp’s
repertoire and reshapes it in the image and for the purposes of those who sing, dance, act, and otherwise perform it. Though the end products of this process can at times be diluted or mutated, in many instances they are deeply powerful with the potential to transform relationships and challenge norms. Third and more broadly, Presentations—along with the discursive spaces they occupy, audiences they attract, themes they communicate, and agenda they espouse—fall squarely within the domain of the contact zone, as do all iterations of music-making in the World Camp model heretofore discussed. Notwithstanding the voluminous number of examples of music-making endemic to Malawian rural society and especially those with deeply transformative potential, these songs, dances, and dramas and the power they represent are unquestionably World Camp’s doing, World Camp’s responsibility, and—not inconsequentially—World Camp’s burden. The question of what change might take place in a Malawi absent World Camp’s presence is an all important one that demands asking; that question, however, is not the one this study has sought to answer.

Finally, Presentations—functioning as the final public act commenced on World Camp’s behalf before volunteers pack up the bus, say their goodbyes, and leave in a noisy cloud of dust—serve an important structural role in both the educational and social exchange taking place in the contact zone. As formal performances come to a close, local teachers are each presented with a certificate of accomplishment endorsed by the Ministry of Education, and the Team Leader presents the headmaster with a poster comprised of pictures from the week. The school also receives a box of condoms to be used for educational purposes: pending prior consent, this public gift also follows the presentations. Following this ceremony, local and school officials often organize a series of dances or performances—in some cases lasting a few minutes, but in others stretching an hour or longer—in recognition and honor of their guests (see DVD clip
These performances are often iconic of ethnic identity, the most visible example being appearances by the *gule wankulu*, the Chewa’s most secretive and powerful spirit-dancer, the institution of which has served to “unite people in times of social stress and act as a powerful curb on the influence of foreign identities” (Daimon 2007:2-3). In other cases, volunteers and Field Staff are often invited to join, often along lines of gender, in the dancing (DVD clip 16). These impromptu performances, particularly when considered alongside the official presentations they follow, constitute a final exchange between the two distinct cultural groups present in the contact zone. As both volunteers and Malawians re-member the events of a camp in subsequent weeks and months—be it in their communities, online, or simply to themselves—these closing ceremonies serve as a social and musical finale. To close this section, it seems fitting to offer one such re-membering of the contact zone—a poem offered spontaneously in English as a coda to Presentations at Milamba Full Primary School by Happy, a standard 7 student:

HIV/AIDS is a global problem, including all over our nation.  
And also the environment is an important one.  
Dear listeners: you are most welcome!  
Today’s news? You are with me, Happy B. Saudifolo and my comrade.  
Firstly we will begin with news with the title of:  
These visitors come here out to Milamba School to teach about HIV/AIDS and the environment.  
HIV is a disease which affects many people throughout Africa, but even in Western countries.  
How beneficial is their presence with us!  
These people are very important, because they assist on how to prevent HIV/AIDS.  
Some of these ways are abstinence, being faithful, and the correct use of a condom.  
The white people are trying to teach us some ways to trick HIV/AIDS!  
Now we will go to tackle this problem of the nation.  
But also the whites have the testimony about the environment we need—  
The environment for this beautiful country.

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41 See DVD clip 15 for an example.  
42 I borrow this term from Barz who himself uses it liberally when exploring the role of memory in expressive culture, and particularly the constitution of traumatic memory through musical means (Barz 2008:165-172).
Mr. Kalumo together with our staff has said that trees help to bring about rain, control soil from erosion and be a source of fresh air and oxygen. Milamba School played soccer with the Whites to fights against HIV/AIDS. Four scores!

Dear listeners: this is the end of our news!
You were with Happy B. Saudifolo and my friend.
(DVD clip 17)

World Camp and Activist Ethnomusicologies: Medical and Evangelical Comparisons

To conclude this study, I wish to reflect on the musics, stories, and analyses contained herein in light of emergent trends in the field of ethnomusicology, trends that not only position this work in the present but actively suggest tracts of inquiry to follow in its stead. Common is the practice of contextualizing a work at its outset—sizing up one’s findings in advance with studies and scholarship that have come before it and hewing out one’s own place in an established literature. When it comes to locating it amongst its peers, in this study I have chosen an inverted structural course. First I presented the political and theoretical contexts for my findings followed by a musical analysis with those frameworks in place. Now having arrived at this study’s conclusion I endeavor to place that analysis in conversation with others trends and figures in the discipline. Though in some ways unorthodox, this choice is in keeping with the archetypical theme for this chapter—change—in that the three sub-fields I discuss—medical, evangelical, and applied ethnomusicology—are concerned with change enacted through musical strategies.

When I first traveled to Malawi several years ago, my own desire for change was palpable: I set out seeking change in light of and in response to geopolitical suffering and injustice to be sure, but I was concurrently hungry for changes in the academic, musical, and personal realms of my own life. A similar desire for multilateral change permeated the atmosphere in both the World Camp house and throughout each camp
during my time in the field: volunteers often consider themselves “in transition” between stages in life, between senses of ambivalence of purpose, and between shifting career interests, all of which can fuel the desire to travel, meet like-minded peers, and devote time and energy to seeking positive change in the lives of others. As such, the analyses that compose this study are concerned with just such “positive” change, the motivations of those who seek it, and the strategies—in this case the musical strategies—that are implemented to bring it about. Unlike some scholars, I began my research with a study object—World Camp itself—rather than with an agenda to which I then applied different study objects in turn, focusing ultimately on those that fit my initial research goals. To that end, the extent to which my work “belongs” to one or more of the activist ethnomusicologies I discuss is ultimately rooted in the extent to which World Camp’s work and my subsequent analysis of that work belongs to such a trend or sub-field. In this regard and upon reflection I might have prepared for or conducted my research differently, but—given the financial, logistical, and institutional restraints placed on my time in the field—the wealth of data I collected and diversity of scholarly parallels I am able to draw as a result are gratifying nonetheless.

The (sub-)field of medical ethnomusicology, though arguably still in its emergent phase as a viable approach within ethnomusicology as a whole, has in the past decade gained a remarkable level of interest from both ethnomusicologists and scholars from other disciplines who see the field as a definitively interdisciplinary venture with appeal to and relevance for many working in “music, the health sciences, integrative, complementary, and alternative medicine (ICAM), the physical and social sciences, medical humanities, and the healing arts” (Koen et al. 2008:3). Gregory Barz defines medical ethnomusicology as
a branch of research grafted onto ethnomusicological and biomedical studies that focuses on factors that cause, maintain, or contribute to disease, illness, or other health-related issues, and the complementary, alternative, or supportive musical strategies and performative practices that different communities have developed to respond to cultural conceptualizations of disease and illness, health and healing. (2006:61)

Barz’s work to date and specifically his ethnography *Singing for Life: HIV/AIDS and Music in Uganda* has focused on the use of music in Uganda at the local and grassroots levels to generate support for those who suffer from HIV in addition to raising awareness of the virus among those for whom behavioral changes are essential to remaining HIV free. Throughout his text he examines in turn the relationships between and among HIV/AIDS, music, religion, women’s rights, linguistics, and cultural memory. In advocating for a more comprehensive and expansive response to the HIV crisis, Barz, writing towards a medical ethnomusicology of AIDS in Africa, underscores “the need to approach the disease as a culturally defined and socially determined phenomenon” (2006:222).

The similarities between World Camp’s mission and the approach evident in the work of Barz and other medical ethnomusicologists are clear: both types of initiatives seek to address the urgency of the epidemic through musical means, often in tandem with non-musical educational initiatives and through rhetorical devices and local imagery that strengthen communities (especially via women), eschew stigmatization, and encourage behavior change. Both types of initiatives develop and build on the strengths of existing localized musical traditions and seek novel performance techniques that maintain audience attention and investment. But there, too, are significant differences. Though some initiatives are in the formative stages, World Camp does not currently actively collaborate with doctors, medical practitioners, or
traditional medical authorities, and—given World Camp volunteers’ itinerant schedules within the country—such relationships are unlikely to emerge within the program’s current structure. Deforestation and gender empowerment—though linked to HIV/AIDS through issues of poverty among others—do not as readily fall within a medical-informed ethnomusicological framework. Though medical ethnomusicologists often study music in conjunction with other initiatives, even my music-based ethnography suggests that though music plays an important—even vital—role in World Camp’s mission it is not the reason volunteers commit to the program, nor does it play a quantifiable role in World Camp’s continued operation as a registered NGO (as opposed to many organizations and groups in Barz’s study that are either categorically musical or “equal parts” music and health-based initiatives). Perhaps most notably, Barz is critical in his study of “private multinational and multilateral NGOs (that) have been either challenged or unsuccessful” in their efforts to combat the virus’s spread (2006:3). Though World Camp is far from a multinational conglomerate, there are aspects of its business model (such its reliance on fresh crops of volunteers that relearn—rather than expand or intensify—curricular material) in opposition to the strategies of smaller, dynamic local organizations that constantly revise and re-examine their own modes of operation. I am mindful that no one text or study—even one as relevant in this instance as Barz’s—should stand in as wholly representative of an entire diverse and vibrant sub-field of the discipline, but a brief comparison between his research areas and mine reveal the extent to which this study might be considered a qualified iterate of medical ethnomusicology: though it is an ethnography of an NGO first and an AIDS-related assistance organization only second, there are still many

43 In fact and as evidenced by Example 4 above the two are at times diametrically opposed.
intriguing points of departure for future field research placing World Camp as well as other international aid groups in medical ethnomusicological frameworks and paradigms.

If one takes pains to illustrate the nuanced contrast between this study and one like Barz’s that falls more completely within medical ethnomusicology, the task of illustrating a similar contrast between this study and evangelical ethnomusicology is, at least initially, a less weighty task. At face value the differences are stark and legion: evangelically-motivated ethnomusicological undertakings are overtly concerned with issues of faith, conversion, and other religious themes that fall squarely outside World Camp’s purview. Unlike medical ethnomusicology, the emergence of which has been roundly welcomed as a site of fruitful interdisciplinary collaboration and connectivity, the resistance within the academy and scholarly community to evangelical tactics and designs meandering into the academic study of music in its social context has been swift. Though it may seem self-evident to annunciate them here, criticisms of evangelical ethnomusicology have centered on the risk of manipulation of subjects and informants by researchers, the conflation of academic with religious or eschatological goals, and the eerie resemblance some see to ethnomusicology’s troubled past in which ethnographers often placed their work within the broader context of a civilizing, moralizing, or Westernizing gesture. For their part, self-identified evangelical ethnomusicologists frame their own pedagogical roots as troubled and conflict-ridden, pointing to an era when missionaries, rather than working to harness the “untapped potential” of local music traditions, would destroy indigenous musical instruments and banish all forms of religious music falling outside the Western art music tradition (Welker 2002:10). As official church doctrine has relented in its ethnocentrism, many evangelical ethnomusicologists argue, so too have missionaries and scholars working in
this sub-field begun to recognize and celebrate cultural difference and diversity of expression. As in the case of any social science, with these ideological reforms have come new paradigmatic definitions. In an effort to draw a line between the secular and missionary strains within the study of music and evangelism, some have advocated the use of the term “ethnodoxology” as a way to differentiate scholars’ interests from missionaries’. Roberta King defines “ethnodoxology” as “the study of the worship of God in the world’s cultures; the theological and practical study of how and why people of other cultures praise and glorify the true and living God” (Shubin 2001). Even with these theoretical divisions in place, however, writers often walk an ideological tightrope as fieldwork and publications on either side of the divide tend to blur any metaphysical distinction between the two. King, for example, has also written about the uses and functions of music within a society as “point(ing) toward effective mission praxis” (King 2004:296).

World Camp takes deliberate steps to package itself as a non-religious organization and venture, going so far as to stress the point repeatedly in one of its YouTube promotional videos. Volunteer (and a coordinator colleague of mine) Jaren Folden states:

I know I had always been very interested in finding a program where I could come over to Africa and volunteer my time, work, experience the culture, and try to make a difference. But, where I’m from, most people who would be willing to do that would be viewed as very religious, missionary-type people. Which is not to say there’s something wrong with it—it’s just not realistically who I am. Something I found really refreshing about World Camp is the variety of people that are here and the nature of the people. Everyone who is here basically they’re normal people just living lives, but they just generally want to come over and make a difference. They’re not necessarily missionary people or very religious people. Some are, which is fine, but it’s just a wide range of people that you can relate to just because they want to come over, they want to be here, and they want to make a difference. (World Camp 2008b)
This sentiment—that, while thoroughly secular, World Camp attracts volunteers with a variety of religious beliefs and faith viewpoints—was borne out in the interviews I conducted: some volunteers claimed feeling as though God desired that they be in Malawi, while at least one volunteer wondered aloud to me why some of her colleagues had not sought out a program with a more overtly religious stance (field notes, 6/23/10). From the summary offered above, many working in evangelical ethnomusicology claim a two-pronged approach similar to the one religious volunteers use to mediate their time with World Camp: while personal faith and religious belief ground their actions and likely played an influential role in their trip to Malawi, “making a difference” need not be restricted to explicit instances of religious conversion or induced spiritual zeal. Given Malawi’s religiously tinged colonial history and the contact zones time and again created by instances of religious encounter, it is hard not to see World Camp’s mission—and indeed any project endeavored by Westerners in Malawi focused on social change—as in some way following the example of missionaries, evangelists, and biblical educators. To this extent and given their frequent collaboration with religious movements and leaders, musical groups like the ones whose musical lives Barz documents also participate in a religiously-informed musical praxis, even as they work at times to undo harm and misinformation brought about by church policies and leaders that fuel mystification and stigmatization concerning HIV. Even with these and other parallels drawn, it still requires a grand epistemological leap to see World Camp’s work and its documentation as encapsulated in this study as iterative of musical missiology, ethnodoxology, or evangelical ethnomusicology. With that said, however, I hope that this study might invite scholars and lay readers alike to trace avenues of resemblance and co-occurrence between even the most seemingly bizarre of disciplinary kissing cousins: whether in anthropology, ethnomusicology,
missiology, or international public health, we all share a murky family resemblance rooted in historical and cultural colonialism, and addressing these links head-on, while at times politically or academically uncouth, brings a more informed perspective to the contact zones of modern field work.

**Conclusion: World Camp in an Applied Perspective**

Beginning with my own work as a World Camp volunteer and concluding with the submission of this thesis, my own location and status in World Camp’s internal hierarchy has undergone its own series of—to hearken back once more to this chapter’s archetypal theme—changes. At the outset of my time in the contact zone I was a full-fledged volunteer ponying up the not insignificant program fee, living in the World Camp house, befriending fellow volunteers and Field Staff members, teaching and toiling at camp, and experiencing profound inspiration at the scenes, stories, and songs I witnessed. In subsequent academic semesters I conducted several informational sessions on the Oberlin campus, answering questions and assuaging fears from potential volunteers as I reflected publicly on my own transformational experience in Malawi. I maintained cordial friendships with my fellow volunteers and the coordinators from my session, communicating regularly via Facebook and email and continuously fostering the desire to return to Malawi in some capacity, possibly with World Camp. Meanwhile, my interest in Malawi and its region of the globe grew, leading me to settle on both a major in Third World Studies and on a particularly sharpened focus on the region’s realities as viewed through the prism of ethnomusicology. I turned to my time in Malawi as the fodder for academic assignments, conference presentations, and research grant proposals, and by the time I returned to the country in an intentional, socially scientific capacity I had winnowed
out a research niche of my own. Over the course of this second research period my time in the field was typified by dual roles as a program coordinator and independent researcher. Though the former role came about to enable the latter, claiming “objectivity” during my time in Malawi was illogical and unhelpful in both theory and practice. At times these dual roles afforded me advantageous agency to shift back and forth depending on specific circumstances: one illustrative example is the week-long hiatus from World Camp that I spent in Mombasa, Kenya, exploring the use of music among other NGOs. At other times, this dual identity was uncomfortable and problematic: interviews with school teachers were particularly difficult to conduct as my interviewees understandably considered me an emissary on behalf of World Camp rather than an individual conducting research in my own right. And despite my indebtedness to the other World Camp coordinators and fulltime U.S. staff, ambiguity about my role occasionally led to misunderstandings that caused the program’s overall fluency to suffer mildly as a result.

Beyond simply being a cause of logistical uncertainty or social awkwardness, focusing one’s research on a cause or activity in which one is himself actively involved raises questions about the extent to which one’s reflexivity or lack thereof affects the findings of said research. Often this concern has been brought to bear—rightly or wrongly—on ethnographers who study their own communities or ethnic groups, but so too has it figured into critiques of scholars actively engaged in the ethnographic study of movements for social change, human welfare, or other “activist” endeavors. Barz, for his part, takes this issue head on when he writes:

My presence in this story that follows is as complicated as it is simple. As a now middle-aged ethnomusicologist I have long given up on objectivity; I am strongly affected by what I have experienced in Uganda and thus my stories reveal a rather personal engagement concerning how I came to know what I know about HIV/AIDS in Africa . . . I am well aware of the potential harm the
As is the case with attempts at defining any and all terms ethnomusicological, a codified term for applied ethnomusicology has yet to emerge. One recently released edited volume put is thusly:

Applied Ethnomusicology is the approach guided by principles of social responsibility which extends the usual academic goal of broadening and deepening knowledge and understanding toward solving concrete problems and toward working both in side and beyond typical academic contexts. (Harrison and Pettan 2010:1)

Other less formal definitions have grasped at an ethnomusicology that “makes the world a better place,” “empowers individuals and communities,” and features “advocacy and social justice aspect(s)” (Society for Ethnomusicology 2011). Katherine Van Buren, an ethnomusicologist researching musical responses to social issues in Nairobi, Kenya, articulates a tendency among some of her colleagues to label her work as “applied” ethnomusicology, thereby inviting the implication that it is not “ordinary” ethnomusicology or that it belongs in a non-normative disciplinary zone (Van Buren 2006:480). Bouts with existential identity such as those taken on by Barz and Van Buren are specifically potent in the realm of HIV/AIDS work where time spent devoted to studying and grappling with the disease can lead the most even-keeled researcher to question how he or she spends his or her money, energy, and cultural capital. They also resonate in the postmodern echo chamber where all researchers but especially ethnographers struggle with the task of representing both themselves and their others in meaningful ways. Furthermore, concerns over the place of applied ethnomusicology can bleed over into the academic job market where discourses about objectivity, scholarship, decorum, and research can dispossess applied contributions of their academic heft.
While some of these concerns ring truer than others, my work here—to the extent
to which it qualifies as “applied”—is not immune from their critiques. World Camp is
itself an organization that sees as its ultimate goal the alleviation of social maladies in
the communities where it operates. In working as a coordinator to bring about these
changes through and on behalf of the organization, I actively offer my voice—as an
international traveler, global citizen, industrialist consumer, musical mind, and,
ultimately, human being—to World Camp’s humanitarian, sociological, and musical
effort. With this in mind, it seems patently contradictory and disciplinarily dishonest to
withhold from that effort my voice, too, as an ethnomusicologist. More immediately,
however, I want to suggest in drawing this study to a close that dichotomies and
classifications that focus on the “applied” nature of research undertaken with the
mindset that one’s participation will induce change are ultimately lending a description
and sub-field classification to a phenomenon that has never ceased to exist. As Jeff Todd
Titon remarks, “The issue isn’t whether intervention is an option; like it or not,
ethnomusicologists intervene” (1992:316). With Titon’s dictum in mind,
ethnomusicologists as well as scholars in other ethnographic fields would do well to
cease questioning whether their work is “applied,” but rather how it is applied, to whom it
is applied, and what role their fieldwork and subsequent ethnography plays in these
processes.

In a recent article, Van Buren quotes Dan Sheehy as suggesting that applied
ethnomusicology “begins with a sense of purpose, a purpose larger than the
advancement of knowledge about music of the world’s people; a purpose that answers
the next question: To what end?” (Sheehy 1992:323 in Van Buren 2010:218). Through a
series of musical and cultural analyses interspersed between anecdotes, pictures,
videos, and the work of other scholars, in this study I have endeavored to answer just
such a question. For World Camp, the “end”—through the intentional though imperfect deployment of musical and other strategies—resembles a Malawi where empowered members at all community strata make scientifically informed decisions while celebrating those aspects of social unity and societal strength that make their families, villages, and nation strong. Through conducting fieldwork, transcribing interviews, analyzing songs and dramas, reading books and journals, and thinking deeply on my location within World Camp’s project, this study enters the fray of organizations, communities, volunteers, and theorists actively working to make this end a reality. And to the question, ultimately, of whether the musical initiatives and strategies depicted in this study enable progress toward such an end, my reflections impart a confident—if qualified—yes.
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Interviews Conducted

Members of Mucobo Community-Based Organization. May 28, 2010, Namitete, Rural West District, Malawi.
Teachers of Tsekwere Primary School. June 3, 1010, Mitundu, Rural West District, Malawi.
Teachers of GoGo Full Primary School. July 14, 2010, Dowa, Dowa District, Malawi.
Teachers of Chala Full Primary School. August 4, 2010, Lukuni, Rural West District, Malawi.
Alicia Davis. August 5, 2010, Lilongwe, Malawi.
Peter Gusto. August 9, 2010, Lilongwe, Malawi.
Appendix A – Map of Malawi
Appendix B – DVD Supplement
Information and Transcriptions

DVD Clip 1 – Marching Song
"Marching Song" performed by World Camp volunteers and the students of Milamba Full Primary School. Recorded June 14, 2010, Nkhoma, Rural West District, Malawi. Accessible at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_O4eaRjkRI

Marching Song Leader: And we're marching...
To the beach (x 3)
I said let me see your _____ (style)

All: What's that you say?

Leader: I said let me see your _____ (style)

All: What's that you say?

Leader: I said let me see your _____ (style)

All: Boom Dee -- ah -- da (repeat x 3 or 4)

The first time through “Marching Song,” volunteers, local teachers, and Field Staff form a circle in the middle of the field. The second time through this circle is replicated on a much larger scale with all students participating. Examples of styles include: shake your booty, stir the nsima, funky chicken, disco fever. In the video example, the styles displayed are “shake your booty” and “funky chicken.”

DVD Clip 2 – Banana Song
"Banana Song" performed by World Camp volunteers and the students of Dzama Full Primary School. Recorded May 26, 2010, Namitete, Rural West District, Malawi. Accessible at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_nPKzROkGw

(Clap hands over head) Bananas of the world unite!
(Peeling motion) Peel bananas, peel, peel bananas (x 2)
(Eating motion) Eat bananas, eat, eat bananas (x 2)
(Act crazy!) Go bananas, go, go bananas (x 2) (repeat all)

As the song progress, volunteers encourage students to converge on the center of the circle for a more effective “act crazy.”
DVD Clip 3 – Humba Humba
“Humba Humba” performed by World Camp volunteers and the students of GoGo Full Primary School. Recorded July 12, 2010, Dowa, Dowa District, Malawi. Accessible at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3mGZbJnhic

Humba! Humba! (each line repeated by group)
A-Ricky-Ticky-Tumba
A-Mussa-Mussa-Mussa
A-Wiki-Wiki-Wiki
Now that was really nothing...
So let's do it LOUDER!
Repeat from beginning x 3 or 4
(Last time): Now that was really something!

DVD Clip 4 – Phazi
“Phazi” performed by World Camp volunteers and the students of Mkanda Full Primary School. Recorded July 23, 2010, Mawelo, Rural West District, Malawi. Accessible at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTFFKIz1LRI

This song is sung in Chichewa, though during my tenure as a volunteer it was in Spanish. Included in parenthesis are the English translations. Choreography is determined by the body part being articulated; dynamics are ad lib.

Phaz, phaz, phaz, phaz, phaz, Phazi! (Feet)
Maundo, maundo, maundo, maundo! (Knees)
Chiuno, chiuno, chiuno, chiuno! (Hips)
Mapewa, mapewa, mapewa, mapewa! (Shoulders)
Manja, manja, manja, manja, manja! (Arms)
Mutu, mutu, mutu, mutu, mutu! (Head)

With each verse an additional body part—and corresponding choreography—is added in an “A – BA – CBA – DCBA etc.” scheme.

DVD Clip 5 – Boom Chika Boom
"Boom Chika Boom” performed by World Camp volunteers and the students of Dzama Full Primary School. Recorded May 26, 2010, Namitete, Rural West District, Malawi. Accessible at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlX4j3XKim8
I said a Boom Chica Boom (repeat from followers)
I said a Boom Chica Boom (repeat from followers)
I said a Boom Chica Rocka Chica Rocka Chica Boom (repeat from followers)
Uh -- Huh (repeat from followers)
Oh -- Yeah (repeat from followers)
One More time _____ (style)

Examples of possible styles include slow, crazy, disco, football, “ride the pony” et al.
The styles featured in this example are “karate” and “rocket ship.”

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**DVD Clip 6 – Classroom Songs (1)**
Classroom Song composed by students of Milamba Full Primary School. Recorded June 14, 2010, Nkhoma, Rural West District, Malawi.
Accessible at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xC0xE_hLJG0

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**DVD Clip 7 – Classroom Songs (2)**
Classroom Song composed by students at Chiudira Full Primary School. Recorded June 21, 2010, Mtengowantha, Dowa District, Malawi.
Accessible at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvnVkMIIpCY

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**DVD Clip 8 – Classroom Songs (3)**
Students of GoGo Full Primary School sing Classroom Songs on the way to their respective classrooms. Recorded July 12, 2010, Dowa, Dowa District, Malawi.
Accessible at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=070SdwIutZc

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**DVD Clip 9 – Chp. 3 Presentations Example 1**
Presented by the students of Dzama Full Primary School. Recorded May 27, 2010, Namitete, Rural West District, Malawi.
Accessible at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6RAeG-c_Qw

(poem)

Hello, I am Lazarus. I have a poem entitled *The Destruction of the Forest*.

All things do end: I remember the old days when things were better—lots of wild animals,
But now you cannot even find a rabbit.
Those of you in the charcoal business: your work is destroying the forest.
If you don’t plant new trees, you yourself will soon have no social livelihood.
Again, to those of you in the charcoal business: if you do not plant more trees, your children in the future will have no source of livelihood.
Your children in the future won’t even have smaller plants to thatch your roofs.

If we were in church, you should respond by saying, “Amen!” But in this forum, I will simply say thank you.

(song)

Trees are good because they give us good fresh air
If we cut trees, we must re-plant them!
Listen, Chiefs: You must remember that trees are good
If we cut trees, we must re-plant them!
Listen, parents: You must remember that trees are good
If we cut trees, we must re-plant them!

DVD Clip 10 – Chp. 3 Presentations Example 2
Presented by the teachers of Chowo Full Primary School. Recorded July 29, 2010, Nkhoma, Rural East District, Malawi.
Accessible at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KODtYhGvV7U

(first song)

AIDS is a dangerous disease: if you’re not careful you will be wiped out!
If you’re not careful, boys and girls, you will perish!
Men and women, let’s protect ourselves from the disease.
The best means of protection is abstinence.

(second song)

Who’s destroying trees?

DVD Clip 11 – Chp. 3 Presentations Example 3
Presented by the students of Mkanda Full Primary School. Recorded July 23, 2010, Mawelo, Rural West District, Malawi.
Accessible at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kae00DIOA-o

Scene 1
A teacher stands at the front of the classroom.

*Teacher:* Hello, class. How are you doing today?

*Students:* (*In unison*) Fine, thank you. How are you?

*Teacher:* Today we will be learning how to read, so please repeat after me. A! E! I! O! U!

*Students:* (*In unison*) A! E! I! O! U! A! e. . . .

A new girl enters the classroom late. The assembled students immediately scatter.

*Teacher:* (*To students*) Why are you running away?

*Girl:* I think they must be running away from me.

*Teacher:* Why?

*Girl:* It must be because I am HIV positive.

*Teacher:* Oh! Well. How did you contract the virus?

*Girl:* (*Distraught*) I don’t know how I got the virus.

*Teacher:* This is a huge problem. I don’t know why they are running away. I will go to the chief about this issue.

*Girl:* Thank you for that.

Scene 2

The girl approaches the chief’s house. She is accompanied by a messenger who has asked her to come with him to visit the chief.

*Chief:* Hello.

*Girl:* Hello, it is important to that I talk you help me. I have been being teased very much in school.

*Chief:* Yes, I heard someone crying in the field and I sent my messenger to find you. The school teacher talked to me about what happened. We need to pay a visit to an AIDS counselor—they might be the only person who can help us.
The Chief, his messenger, and the girl approach the house of a local HIV/AIDS counselor. All share greetings.

Chief: I was near my field when I heard crying, so I sent my messenger to see what the problem was. This girl was so upset. Apparently her friends at school tease her relentlessly because she is HIV positive. Her teacher had mentioned this to me already about how great a problem it is. I am very concerned. What counsel can you offer?

Counselor: Ok, this is what we should do. We should visit your village, chief, and then visit your school, young lady, and speak openly and actively about this issue. It seems to me that there is a troubling lack of awareness about how the virus can be transmitted: your fellow students are running away from you because they fear that they can catch the virus just by sitting next to you. They are riddled with misconceptions. Let's take care of this important task right now.

Scene 3

As a transition, the village chief sends his messenger to address the class.

Messenger: Listen all to me all you students! Tomorrow there is a member of the HIV/AIDS counseling center coming! We must all meet at the chief's house to accept this important visitor who has a message for us about AIDS.

The following day, the students for the class assemble at the chief's house.

Chief: Hello to everyone and thank you for coming.

Students: (In unison) Thank you.

Chief: First I want to recognize the important people here with us today. There is the AIDS counselor who is here to address us, but there is also your teacher, another very important woman. I grew very concerned about this problem when I could hear this young lady crying audibly in the fields. I spoke with her about the serious problem she is having at school, and then we traveled to see the HIV/AIDS counselor who is here with us today. I thank all of you from coming once again.

Counselor: (To the group) Thank you for coming.

Students: (In unison) Thank you.

Counselor: I am here because of this girl. Everyone is running away from her while she is in school. I think it is very important for you to know how the virus is actually transmitted so this girl's stigmatization doesn't continue. For one, you cannot contract the virus by shaking hands with someone who is HIV positive.
Teacher: (Interrupting) That is a lie: there is no way that it is possible that you can’t contract the virus from shaking hands. I strongly disagree. But, you may continue.

Counselor: There is no way for you to contract the virus through ordinary bodily contact.

Teacher: Again, this is outrageous. If you are so sure of your claims, why don’t you try to demonstrate? Go! Touch her!

The counselor approaches the girl. The two engage in an embrace, in addition to rubbing faces together.

Teacher: Oh goodness—you are correct!

The teacher approaches the girl and also embraces her.

Counselor: There is one more thing: you also cannot contract the virus through sweat. It is important that you listen: the only three ways you can contract the virus are through unprotected sex, blood to blood contact, and mother to child transmission.

The drama ends.

DVD Clip 12 – Chp. 3 Presentations Example 4
Presented by the students of Chala Full Primary School. Recorded August 4, 2010, Lukuni, Rural West District, Malawi.
Accessible at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyegStTAeH8

Leader: The title of this play is “Three Major Way Through Which AIDS is Spread.”

Scene 1

Girl 1: How are you?

Girl 2: Oh, I have a boyfriend now. He gives me a lot of money, just look at how I’m dressing now!

Girl 1: Oh, I also have a boyfriend.

Boy 1 enters, leaves with Girl 2. After he presents her with money, the two embrace repeatedly—functioning here as an icon for having sex.
Boy 2 enters.

Boy 2: Oh you want to have sex?

Girl 1: We must use a condom.

Boy 2: Come on, you cannot eat a candy with the wrapper left on it.44

Boy 2 and Girl 1 leave together and “embrace.”

Scene 2

A witch doctor (traditional healer) holds forth at his home. He is approached by three male villagers seeking counsel.

Witch Doctor (WD): I have the cure for AIDS!

The witch doctor hits a flyswatter—a familiar accessory of traditional healers—to the ground repeatedly.

WD: Don't get too close—you'll get hurt. Just stay over there, stay over there. Don't look here, avert your eyes! Ok, approach, but you must jump backwards. Something's going to happen to you if you look!

Men approach by jumping backwards.

What can I help you with here?

Man 1: Well—I think I have malar . . .

WD: No, don't mention that! I already knew that! Let me talk to my spirit.

(Speaking into cup) “Hello, I have three people here . . . Ok, ok, very good.”

(To Man 1) Ok—close your eyes. You have come here, now let me do my job. Close your eyes. I will use one razor to apply the medicine to you...

Man 2: No—you can’t use one razor blade for all of us, you may spread the virus if one of us has it.

44 This is a common idiom in Malawi: the wrapper in this analogy refers to a condom and the sweetness of eating unwrapped candy is analogous to the supposed pleasure of having unprotected sex.
**WD**: No, no I have the cure for AIDS.

**Man 2**: I can’t do that—I’m out of here!

*Man 2 turns and leaves.*

**WD**: You are leaving?! You will be stricken by madness! You will be crippled!

*The witch doctor administers medicine via a razor blade to Men 1 and 3. They seem surprised by the pain, and then leave the witch doctor’s house.*

Scene 3

**Girl 2 from the Scene 1 approaches the witch doctor’s house.**

**Girl 2**: Hello?

**WD**: Turn around—this is a dangerous place. You can’t just walk here!

*Girl 2 turns around and approaches backwards.*

Slowly, slowly, slowly!

**Girl 2**: I have felt very sick.

**WD**: For how long?

**Girl 2**: I think I have the virus. I want you to treat me with your traditional medicine.

**WD**: Ah yes, it is true: I have the cure for AIDS! Don’t listen to people who tell you to go to hospital—you should just come here! This is the right place. I will cure you, and when you leave, go and tell people that I have the cure.

**Girl 2**: But this razor blade has blood stains on it.

**WD**: Don’t worry—that just means that I have been using it because people have been coming to me to be healed.

*The witch doctor administers the medicine and the woman jumps back in surprise.*

Oh, sorry, sorry.

*Upset, the woman leaves the house.*
Scene 4

*The witch doctor continues to whisk the ground around his house while muttering nonsense syllables. A husband and wife approach. The female is holding a baby in her arms.*

**Husband:** (To wife) Our child looks pretty healthy right now. What do you think we should do to ensure this trend continues?

**Wife:** If it were up to me, I’d take our child to a hospital.

**Husband:** What are we doing about food for this child?

**Wife:** Well, for the first six months I will continue breastfeeding the child as well as feeding our child other healthy foods.

**Husband:** Well, I think the best thing for our child is to get it tested. To accomplish this, let’s go to a witch doctor.

*The couple arrives at the witch doctor’s house. The witch doctor is busy communicating with spirits.*

**WD:** (Speaking into cups) Yes. Ok, but explain to me how . . .

**Husband:** Hello there?

**WD:** (Very surprised) You there! Be careful—this is a dangerous place! Approach with your backs turned! Slowly, slowly.

*The witch doctor whisks the ground around his new guests to shoo away any bad spirits they may have brought with them.*

Sit down! Sit down! This is how I do it, this is my process. I will cut you with a razor blade to check your blood for HIV.

**Husband looks worried.**

Are you afraid? If you are afraid I won’t do it.

*The witch doctor cuts the husband with the razor blade.*

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45 Spoken in English, this command evokes glee from the crowd for the way it resembles imperatives spoken by Malawian teachers. If they are linguistically capable, Malawian teachers will often switch back and forth erratically between Chichewa and English while teaching.
Husband: Ouch! You cut it much too deep.

WD: Ok, I have checked: you do not have the virus. (To wife) Are you worried? Don’t worry, I am sure you don’t have the virus either. Just let me check. If I find you with the virus, I promise I won’t tell your husband.

The witch doctor cuts the woman with the razor blade and “tests” her blood.

(To husband in an aside) You don’t have the virus, but your wife does have it.

The witch doctor whisks the ground near the wife, as if to warn off the virus that she has “brought” with her. The witch doctor then proceeds to check the child for HIV.

(To wife) As I said before, if I find that your child has the virus, I won’t tell your husband.

(To husband) All I can really say is that your blood is very good, but hers? Well, it’s only decent.

Husband: (To witch doctor) Look, you are not giving us a straight answer. Just tell me what I should do. Does she have the virus or doesn’t she?

WD: Well, I am afraid your fears have been confirmed.

Husband: She does have the virus?

WD: Yes. It is as you say.

Husband: (To wife) How can this be? How did you get the virus if I don’t have it? And what about our child? Does he have it or not?

The drama ends.
HIV/AIDS is a global problem, including all over our nation. And also the environment is an important one. Dear listeners: you are most welcome! Today’s news? You are with me, Happy B. Saudifolo and my comrade. Firstly we will begin with news with the title of: These visitors come here out to Milamba School to teach about HIV/AIDS and the environment. HIV is a disease which affects many people throughout Africa, but even in Western countries. How beneficial is their presence with us! These people are very important, because they assist on how to prevent HIV/AIDS. Some of these ways are abstinence, being faithful, and the correct use of a condom.
The white people are trying to teach us some ways to trick HIV/AIDS! Now we will go to tackle this problem of the nation. But also the whites have the testimony about the environment we need—The environment for this beautiful country. Mr. Kalumo together with our staff has said that trees help to bring about rain, control soil from erosion and be a source of fresh air and oxygen. Milamba School played soccer with the Whites to fights against HIV/AIDS. Four scores!
Dear listeners: this is the end of our news!
You were with Happy B. Saudifolo and my friend.
Introduction

Schedule

The times allowed for each activity are approximate and may vary according to student participation, number of children, and arrival and departure times. Although the team may experience many obstacles and adjustments to these schedules, please do your best to keep on time!

Day One

10:00--10:40 Morning Songs/Games (40 min) 10:40--12:55 HIV/AIDS Education (2 hr, 15 min)
12:55--1:45 Environmental Education (50 min)
1:45--2:15 Lunch* (30 min)
2:15--3:25 Empowerment: Puberty (1 hr, 10 min)
3:25--3:45 Afternoon Games (20 min)

Day Two

10:00--10:40 Morning Songs/Games (40 min)
10:40--12:00 HIV/AIDS Education (1 hr, 20 min)
12:00--12:30 Lunch* (30 min)
12:30--1:50 Environmental Education (1 hr, 20 min)
2:00-4:00 Empowerment: Sex, HIV, Decisions (2 hr)
*No afternoon games*

Day Three

10:00--10:40 Morning Songs/Games (40 min)
10:40--11:50 HIV/AIDS Education (1 hr, 10 min)
11:50--12:40 Environmental Education (50 min)
12:40--1:10 Lunch (30 min)
1:10--1:40 Presentations Practice (30 min)
1:40--2:50 Empowerment: Gender (1 hr, 15 min)
2:55--3:25 Afternoon Games (30 min)

Day Four

10:00--10:40 Morning Songs/Games (40 min)
10:40--10:45 Solar Oven Set Up (5 min)
10:45--11:00 Curriculum Quiz (15 min)
11:00--11:45 Jungle Walk (45 min)
11:45--12:25 Anonymous Questions (40 min)
12:25--12:55 Student Activism (30 min)
12:55--1:15 Tree Planting** (20 min)
1:15--1:45 Lunch* (30 min)
1:45--2:05 Presentations Practice (20 min)
2:05--2:15 Solar Oven Check (10 min)
2:15--2:25 AIDS Ribbons (10 min)
2:25—Presentations, Certificates, Closing (~1 hr)
Overview

The WC program aims to equip Malawian primary school teachers with accurate, up-to-date information and effective pedagogical skills for defeating HIV/AIDS and deforestation in their local communities. Through observing the curriculum in practice and attending focus meetings, Malawian primary school teachers expand their understanding of the material and effective teaching methods. The curriculum builds upon students’ understanding of HIV and deforestation, challenges their attitudes, and enables them to practice healthy life-skill skills. It also aims to develop the students’ notions of team work and their capacity for problem solving.

Most camps comprise four days. Day 1 focuses on team building and teaching information about HIV/AIDS and deforestation. Day 2 seeks to develop healthy attitudes, life skills, and problem-solving capabilities among students. Day 3 adopts a more participatory approach by asking students to engage in conversations, lead the creation of educational dramas, and construct alternative energy sources. Day 4 aims to review major lessons, quiz the students’ understanding, and take action through community performances and tree planting.

World Camp volunteers serve in one of three roles at each camp: Instructor, Team Leader or Teacher Facilitator. Team Leaders manage the WC teachers while Teacher Facilitators discuss methodologies and curriculum content with local teachers. While most of the curriculum is directed towards WC teachers, it often refers to the duties of Team Leaders (TL) and Teacher Facilitators (TF) at different points in the day. The curriculum covers material that WC teachers are expected to teach, and offers many teaching hints. Furthermore, pertinent Chichewa words and phrases are written after the corresponding English word or phrase in parenthetical italic text. For instance: How are you? (Muli bwanji?) A detailed Chichewa language guide is included as Appendix H.

The WC curriculum is time-tested and changes from year to year. Much of this development comes from volunteers learning more about Malawian culture and these issues, as well as their experience in the classroom. Volunteers are expected to participate and lead research and curriculum development throughout the session. World Camp was founded by university students and it is the ideas and work of young people that helps improve our program and inspire students to take action in their communities.

Using the WC Curriculum

The WC Curriculum contains everything you need to know for camp and to be a successful educator of HIV/AIDS and environmental issues in Malawian primary schools. Please read through carefully, make notes, and refer back to these pages frequently.

This document provides an overview of teaching in Malawi, what camp days are like, and of our focus issues. Curriculum material is broken down by day and topic. There are sections for Songs/Games, HIV/AIDS lessons, Environment lessons, and Empowerment discussions for each day. In each section you will find:

TITLE/TIME—indicates what the topic is and how long it should take to cover the material
OBJECTIVE—purpose of the section, what students should know by the end of the section
MATERIALS—what you and your students need to complete the section
SECTION DELIVERY—Instructions on how to carry out the lesson outlined in each section
REVIEW—questions to ask, ensuring your students’ understanding
TEACHING TIPS—former volunteers’ wisdom for leading a successful class
How to teach the WC Curriculum

Relating facts and facilitating discussions across a cultural divide requires energy and innovation. This section covers the foundations of WC’s pedagogical approach.

Objectivity

While discussions about HIV/AIDS and deforestation will invite program participants to share their personal opinions and biases, WC volunteers must focus on presenting objective, factual information. Volunteers should refrain from imposing value judgments, rather encouraging participants to draw their own conclusions when sharing objective information. Instead of casting a person or behavior as wrong, volunteers should focus on the logical, direct, and potentially harmful consequences of certain behaviors. For example, as part of the HIV/AIDS education, a volunteer might say that if a couple chooses to have unprotected sex, they are putting themselves at a significantly higher risk of contracting HIV/AIDS than a couple who chooses to use a condom. As part of the environmental education, a volunteer might say that having larger families increases the rate of deforestation, as more people consume more natural resources instead of indicating that it is bad to have big families or produce lots of children. Ultimately, volunteers should prompt program participants to think critically and draw their own conclusions about whether certain decisions and behaviors are positive or negative.

Flexibility

Every day, WC Teachers, Teacher Facilitators, and Team Leaders encounter new, unexpected obstacles. It may be necessary to alter curriculum content and/or adapt teaching styles to suit the needs of participants and/or fellow volunteers. For example, small children often crowd around in groups and distract classes. Volunteers must maintain professionalism and utilize the teaching team to stay on course.

Energy

Volunteers must remain energetic and positive throughout the tiring day. Morning songs and games start the day with high energy that should continue through afternoon games. Volunteers should engage shy or uninterested program participants with eye contact, movement, expression, and vocal projection. Volunteers should also use humor to break the ice or prevent a class from losing momentum. If the participants appear bored, volunteers are encouraged to take a brief break from the curriculum and re-energize students by singing songs like “Head, shoulders, knees, and toes” or doing star jumps together. Whenever WC teachers have a dull moment, extra time, or are without a translator, they may clap their hands to spark song and dance among their students. Volunteers need not be weary about using physical contact, e.g. ‘high fives’ or shaking hands, to encourage correct answers and general participation.

Inquiry

Volunteers should lecture as little as possible. Rather, the curriculum often directs volunteers to ask program participants for their thoughts, feelings, opinions, and what they know or would like to know about subject matter. Using this Socratic form of inquiry helps volunteers to better understand participants’ lives and communities, as well as improve our curriculum. It also allows volunteers that are new to Malawian culture to approach issues from the viewpoint of participants. Volunteers learn from participants; students, teachers, and other community members are a valuable source of information and hold the keys to defeating the HIV/AIDS epidemic and environmental degradation. Volunteers should transform every point possible in the curriculum into a question. (Of course, volunteers are expected to call on participants of both genders!) Volunteers may
begin with open questions (e.g. what are the effects of deforestation?), but if participants are unresponsive, they can pose easier, more closed questions (e.g. does soil erosion make the land more or less fertile?). If participants are responsive and engaged, volunteers may further probe issues by asking questions that encourage students to go deeper (e.g. why? do you agree or disagree?). Suggested questions and hints for this are included at the end of specific curriculum sections. As the curriculum progresses, volunteers may test participants’ understanding of the subjects’ interconnectivity by reviewing past sections and pursuing further questions.

Transitions

Finally, volunteers should make clear transitions from one subject to the other. The WC curriculum is lengthy and Malawian students may not be familiar with this type of interactive educational experience. To avoid confusion, volunteers should introduce and close all lessons clearly, verbalizing lesson objectives when appropriate. For example, sometimes students don’t realize that lessons have transitioned from Morning Games to HIV Education or from HIV Education to Environmental Education. Personalized introductions help students make quick transitions. WC teachers should be familiar enough with the curriculum to include transitions and help draw connections between sections for their students. For instance, when switching from HIV/AIDS education to environmental education on Day 1, WC teachers may say something like “This morning we’ve talked a lot about HIV/AIDS and the health of our bodies. Just as these issues are important to discuss, so is learning about the health of our earth and how it affects us as individuals. I’d like to begin this with a discussion about deforestation.”