

Still an Ethnomusicologist (for Now)

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My writing process is straightforward: I read, listen, take notes, outline, write a draft, and edit until I'm satisfied.¹ Composing this response has been different. After months of reflection, I wrote and scrapped multiple versions. I even began preparing a version as a lecture but abandoned it two days before the talk. My difficulty in formulating a response is a testament to the importance, complexity, and dynamic nature of the issues Stephen Amico raises. Many of his concerns had already been on my mind. And I am not alone. Ethnomusicology's signature obsession with self-definition² has moved toward a more urgent mode of self-scrutiny³ in the face of increasingly normalized white supremacy, misogyny, and homophobia in the United States. What does it mean to be an ethnomusicologist in these times? How do we contend with our pasts and work toward new futures? While we may not have reached a "comprehension of [our] failings" (Amico, 4), we are certainly confronting them.

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¹ I would like to thank Jessica Swanston Baker, Philip V. Bohlman, Ximena Briceño, Jennifer Iverson, Erol Koymen, and Judith Zeitlin for their dialogue with me about this response. Any errors are mine alone.

² Philip V. Bohlman, "Other Ethnomusicologies, Another Musicology: The Serious Play of Disciplinary Alterity," in *The New (Ethno)musicologies*, ed. Henry Stobart (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 95–114, at 101; Bruno Nettl, "Introduction," in *Comparative Musicology and Anthropology of Music: Essays on the History of Ethnomusicology*, ed. Bruno Nettl and Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), xi–xvii; and Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts*, new edition (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 3–15.

³ See, for example, Bruno Nettl, *Nettl's Elephant: On the History of Ethnomusicology* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 54–69; the program of the 2018 Society for Ethnomusicology's Annual Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico (<http://www.indiana.edu/~semhome/2018/pdf/SEM%202018%20Program%20Book.pdf>); and the program of the 2019 meeting in Bloomington, Indiana (http://www.ethnomusicology.org/resource/resmgr/docs/sem_2019_program_final_10.3.pdf).

I will follow Amico's lead and show my cards at the start: I agree with many of his critiques but am not convinced that musicology is the silver bullet—at least not now. In the geo-historical location from which I write, I fear that without ethnomusicology, musicology programs would neither make space for music from outside of Europe and North America nor address how coloniality has shaped the history of Western art music.⁴ Rather than ushering in the end of ethnomusicology, I am interested in a future in which music departments *collectively* embrace a decolonizing mission and discard the West/non-West binary.

On the One Hand, Yes

I could abandon the title “ethnomusicologist.” In many contexts, I already have.

I was trained at the University of Illinois, where ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl insisted on a musicology that encompasses all musics and all approaches. This practice continues today; both music historians and ethnomusicologists at Illinois hold the title “Professor of Musicology,” and students of both subfields earn a PhD in Musicology.⁵ Illinois trained me to identify as a musicologist who is more specifically an ethnomusicologist. Only later did I learn that this is an unusual departmental structure.

In most departments, “musicology” means “Western historical musicology,” but there was nothing inevitable about Western music historians' claim on musicology. According to Nettl, “the predecessors of ethnomusicology before and shortly after 1900 seemed to be central to the developing musicology.”⁶ In the 1880s comparative musicologists figured prominently in the first issues of the *Vierteljahrschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, and in the 1930s the New York Musicological Society (the precursor to the American Musicological Society) comprised a fairly equal distribution of comparative musicologists, librarians, theorists, composers, and music historians. American musicology's ecumenicism began to decline in the 1940s, when European humanities scholars sought refuge from the Holocaust, fascism, and war, bringing with them

⁴ On coloniality, modernity, and decoloniality, see Walter Mignolo, “Modernity and Decoloniality,” in *Oxford Bibliographies Online*, Latin American Studies, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780199766581-0017> (accessed July 26, 2019); and Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

⁵ Within the Musicology program, there are tracks in music history and ethnomusicology: <https://music.illinois.edu/area/musicology> (accessed July 26, 2019).

⁶ Nettl, *Nettl's Elephant*, 95.

a preference for traditional European music history.⁷ In the wake of World War II, ethnomusicology settled into its position of alterity, becoming the other field and the field of the Other.⁸

When Nettl entered the discipline in the 1950s, comparative musicology was being remade as ethnomusicology and struggling to find a place within music departments. He wrote, “the musicologists sometimes worried. Do we really need someone to teach only courses on non-Western and folk traditions? If one spoke of the need for a second ethnomusicologist to balance the five music historians, one heard ‘The ethnoses are taking over.’”⁹ Things are different now, but not as different as one might expect. Many departments or schools of music, including those with robust musicology programs, would balk at the idea of hiring more than two ethnomusicologists. Before I began teaching at the University of Chicago in 2018, I spent twelve years as the sole ethnomusicologist at two major research universities. Both departments were wonderfully supportive of me and my research, but it was difficult—if not impossible—for me to make any curricular changes that would decenter Western art music.

These institutional considerations aside, I sometimes call myself a “musicologist” simply because “ethnomusicology” is a confusing mouthful. (I recall the skeptical look that a US border agent gave me when I told her I am an ethnomusicologist. “Is that even a thing?,” she responded.) Other times, I dispense with “ethno-” to avoid the misunderstanding that ethnomusicology = ethnic + musicology, or the study of “ethnic music.” This misconception, which Amico pins on ethnomusicologists, contrasts with the self-definition of most ethnomusicologists, who embrace the prefix because it signals our relationship to anthropology and ethnographic method. John Blacking was neither the first to write that the field should be defined by method rather than geographic location or repertoire (which Amico asserts is “ethnic music”), nor was he a lone voice.¹⁰ Amico

⁷ Reinhold Brinkman and Christoph Wolff, eds., *Driven into Paradise: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), especially Bruno Nettl’s contribution, “Displaced Musics and Immigrant Musicologists: Ethnomusicological and Biographical Perspectives,” 54–65; and Nettl, *Nettl’s Elephant*, 95.

⁸ Michel-Rolph Trouillot similarly notes that anthropology’s monopoly on what he called the “Savage slot” is based on “contingent factors of . . . institutionalization,” and that “had Classics maintained a more sustained dialogue with Orientalism, had Oriental Studies remained vibrant in France and especially in Britain, had sociology become an institutional arm of the state abroad as it was at home, cultural anthropology’s niche and formalization would have been different.” Trouillot, *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 19.

⁹ Nettl, *Nettl’s Elephant*, 95.

¹⁰ Frank Harrison, “American Musicology and the European Tradition,” in Frank Harrison, Mantle Hood, and Claude V. Palisca, *Musicology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1963), 1–85; cf. Mantle Hood, *The Ethnomusicologist* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 2,

himself admits that “there exists ethnomusicological work that interrogates the very idea of stable, univocal “ethnic” identities—in relation to both local and global dynamics—as well as research produced by scholars who share a similar geocultural location with their subjects” (8). He implies that this work is unusual, when in fact the list of those who have critiqued “stable, univocal ‘ethnic’ identities” includes the scholars cited by Amico and many more—for much longer than he indicates—in both ethnomusicology and anthropology.

Amico argues for the end of ethnomusicology on ethical grounds; others have asserted that the boundaries between ethnomusicology and musicology are dissolving on their own.¹¹ I call myself a musicologist when I want to emphasize the historiographic aspects of my work. It is no longer a marginal practice for ethnomusicologists to engage with history or for historical musicologists to draw on anthropological theory. Indeed, it has been twenty-four years since the *Journal of the American Musicological Society* published an important special issue dedicated to this boundary-crossing scholarship.¹² My own work is informed by this trend: although I trained in anthropology and ethnomusicology, my dissertation and first book were based in both ethnography and archival research, and my last three peer-reviewed journal articles are primarily historical and were published in musicology journals and *History and Anthropology*.¹³

3–4; Alan Merriam, “Ethnomusicology: Discussion and Definition of the Field,” *Ethnomusicology* 4 (1960): 107–14; and Nettl, *Study of Ethnomusicology*, 3–15.

¹¹ For discussions on this topic and examples of scholarship that blurs the boundaries between history and ethnography, see Stephen Blum, Philip V. Bohlman, and Daniel M. Neuman, eds., *Ethnomusicology and Modern Music History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Bohlman, “Other Ethnomusicologies”; Nicholas Cook, “We Are All (Ethno)musicologists Now,” in *The New (Ethno)musicologies*, ed. Henry Stobart (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 48–70; Martha Feldman, “Magic Mirrors and the Seria Stage: Thoughts toward a Ritual View,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48 (1995): 423–84; Kay Kaufman Shelemay, “Music, Memory, and History,” *Ethnomusicology Forum* 15 (2006): 17–37; and Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, “Music Anthropologies and Music Histories: A Preface and an Agenda,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48 (1995): 331–42.

¹² *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48, no. 3 (1995), a special issue entitled “Music Anthropologies and Music Histories.”

¹³ Anna Schultz, “*Rashtriya Kirtan* of Maharashtra: Musical Fragments of Nationalist Politics” (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2004); Schultz, *Singing a Hindu Nation: Marathi Devotional Performance and Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Schultz, “The Afterlives of Publishing: Christian Texts for Indian Jewish Song,” *Acta Musicologica* 88 (2016): 63–86; Sumanth Gopinath and Anna Schultz, “Sentimental Remembrance and the Amusements of Forgetting in Karl & Harty’s ‘Kentucky,’” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 69 (2016): 477–524; and Schultz, “Translated Fronts: Songs of Socialist Cosmopolitanism in Cold War India,” *History and Anthropology* 28 (2017): 1–22.

On the Other Hand, No

I agree with many of Amico's critiques but diagnose different underlying causes and find no elixirs within musicology. Amico accuses ethnomusicology of "a feverish attempt to find and examine (read: construct) the "real," and to build musical actors and actions that seem to embody a pre- or anticapitalist authenticity, an ideal that seems only to lie in the realm of the non-Western, the subaltern, and the 'ethn-'ic" (12). This was once true.¹⁴ But this fever has long since subsided. Indeed, the study of hybrid, mobile, transnational, and mediated musics are everywhere in ethnomusicology and have been since the early 1990s.¹⁵ While some ethnomusicologists still cling to reductive culturalism (regardless of their orientation toward capitalism), this is becoming more and more marginal in a field that increasingly favors nuanced accounts of place and performativity.¹⁶

I believe—and I think most ethnomusicologists would agree—that ethnomusicology is and should be a discipline in which all types of music are deemed worthy of attention and study. According to Amico, reality does not match this ideal. He experienced ethnomusicology as a "highly policed gauntlet of velvet ropes" (5) that hinders scholars with interests lower in the hierarchy of acceptability. In his case, this included Russian dance music, mass-mediated genres, nonnormative sexualities, and queer and gender theory. My dissertation on music, religion, and nationalism in western India would probably fall squarely into what he would characterize as "the realm of the non-Western, the subaltern, and the 'ethn-'ic", but my journey toward a career in ethnomusicology was similarly rocky. I landed my first tenure-track job after eight years of applications, ten campus interviews, three years as an adjunct, and five years in visiting positions. My difficulty securing a permanent job may have resulted from a crowded job market, the Recession, countless interview flubs, low self-confidence, gender discrimination,¹⁷ and my focus

¹⁴ This was perhaps most dramatically (and controversially) articulated by Alan Lomax's notion of "cultural greyout." See Alan Lomax, *Folk Song Style and Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1978), 4–6.

¹⁵ E.g., Mark Slobin, "Micromusics of the West: A Comparative Approach," *Ethnomusicology* 36 (1992): 1–87; Veit Erlmann, "The Politics and Aesthetics of Transnational Music," *World of Music* 35, no. 2 (1993): 3–15; and Jocelyne Guilbault, "On Redefining the 'Local' Through World Music," *World of Music* 35, no. 2 (1993): 33–47.

¹⁶ See, for example, Benjamin Tausig, "Sound and Movement: Vernaculars of Sonic Dissent," *Social Text* 36 (2018): 25–45; David McDonald, "Poetics and the Performance of Violence in Israel/Palestine," *Ethnomusicology* 53 (2008): 58–85; and Deborah Wong, *Speak it Louder: Asian Americans Making Music* (London: Routledge, 2004).

¹⁷ I cannot find the job wiki from the year I was hired, but if my memory is correct, I was the only woman to begin a tenure-track position in 2010 (out of approximately eleven positions for which an ethnomusicologist could fit the bill). No tenure-track historical musicology positions went to women that year. Ryan Raul Bañagale, "Musicology Job Wiki

on “traditional” music (when popular music research seemed more, well, popular). There is no way for me to verify the exact reasons for my struggle nor to assess which of these factors was most important.¹⁸

I did encounter one unquestionable “velvet rope” in the path toward employment that resonates with Amico’s perspective on ethnomusicology: the “world music ensemble.” Although Amico addressed such ensembles only in passing, their ubiquity resonates with his critique of “(authenticity fetishizing) ethnomusicologists” (11). Throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century, ensemble instruction was listed as a preference in many ethnomusicology job ads, and my inability/unwillingness to teach an ensemble came up more than once in the feedback I received from search committee chairs. Given the nature of my research, it never felt right for me—a white, non-Hindu American—to teach the music I had studied in India. I value the insights that come from embodied musical education, but I also believe that not every music can or should be taught by ethnomusicologists in American universities. This is not a question of “authenticity” but of cross-cultural ethics. Many ensembles are thoughtfully conceived and taught by ethnomusicologists (“insider,” “outsider,” or in between) with decades of performance experience. But the *de rigueur* nature of world music performance ensembles often makes it difficult to question critically whether some musics may be too precious or sacred to share, some ensembles may promote an exoticizing touristic frame, and some ensembles may be read as appropriation by culture bearers.¹⁹

I suspect that Amico would agree with me on those points, but we would diverge on the matter of causality. It is tempting to see this “world-musicification” as a failing of ethnomusicology,²⁰ but my experience leads me to take a broader view. Six of the departments where I interviewed had no ethnomusicologists, three had a single ethnomusicologist, and only one had multiple ethnomusicologists. My perception at the time was that

Roundup 2010—Some Data and Hiring Figures,” in Ryan Raul Bañagale and Drew Massey, *Amusicology: Musicology in 1,000 Words or Less*, <https://amusicology.wordpress.com/2010/07/24/musicology-job-wiki-roundup-2010-some-data-and-hiring-figures/> (accessed July 23, 2019); Travis Jackson, “Rearticulating Ethnomusicology: Privilege, Ambivalence, and Twelve Years in SEM,” *Ethnomusicology* 50 (2006): 280–86; Timothy Rice, “SEM Soundbyte: How Is SEM Doing on Diversity?,” *SEM Newsletter* 38, no. 4 (2004): 1, 3; and Deborah Wong, “Ethnomusicology and Difference,” *Ethnomusicology* 50 (2006): 259–79.

¹⁸ Apropos Amico’s suggestion that job postings call out regional specialties, in the year I received my first tenure-track job there was only one regionally specific posting (for an Africanist). Bañagale, “Musicology Job Wiki Roundup 2010.”

¹⁹ For reflections on the practice and ethics of world music ensembles, see Ted Solis, ed., *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

²⁰ Michelle Bigenho, “Why I Am Not an Ethnomusicologist: A View from Anthropology,” in *The New (Ethno)musicologies*, ed. Henry Stobart (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 28–39.

the expectation for “world music” pedagogy was coming less from ethnomusicologists and more from non-ethnomusicologists. That said, the practice did emerge from within the field of ethnomusicology itself—it would be naïve to assert otherwise—but it represents only one strand and has been the subject of intense debate since the 1950s.²¹ There is, moreover, a distinction between performance as a research method, which most ethnomusicologists employ to some degree or another, and the expectation that ethnomusicologists will teach ensembles.

As noted by Amico, and also by Laudan Nooshin and Philip Bohlman, ethnomusicology may be defined by method rather than repertoire but in practice it is shaped by its alterity to musicology and Western art music.²² Ethnomusicologists, including those who are culture bearers and those who come to musical practices as outsiders, are nearly without exception tasked with teaching and advising musics outside of the Western canon. As Amico points out, this separates departments into West/non-West or North/South. This is problematic enough on its own, but it is compounded by a concomitant methodological separation: ethnography is deemed appropriate for the non-West; historical methods are deemed appropriate for the West. These institutional forms remain entrenched, even as research methods and theories are increasingly hybridized. Responsibility for this lies as much with ethnomusicologists as with musicologists. It is as frustrating for someone studying Chinese music in the Song Dynasty to find employment as a historical musicologist as it is for someone studying European music to land a job as an ethnomusicologist. (There are several examples of the latter, but very few of the former.)

The West/non-West binary is both colonial and colonizing, but ethnomusicology cannot decolonize alone. It is impossible to talk about ethnomusicology’s monopoly on the non-West without talking about historical musicology’s relationship to the West. In order to tear down the binary, historical musicologists will need to let go of the fiction that there is a European music history devoid of coloniality even as ethnomusicologists need to let go of their alterity.²³ This is impossible within the Western-music-history-survey paradigm—a model that creates Others, centers western Europe, and asserts that colonization is only a tangential aspect of music history. I don’t expect this paradigm to change so long as mastery of repertoire remains central to university

²¹ Mantle Hood, “The Challenge of ‘Bi-Musicality,’” *Ethnomusicology* 4 (1960): 55–59; and Alan Merriam, “Ethnomusicology: Discussion and Definition of the Field.”

²² Bohlman, “Other Ethnomusicologies”; and Laudan Nooshin, “Ethnomusicology, Alterity, and Disciplinary Identity; or ‘Do We Still Need an -Ethno?’ ‘Do We Still Need an -ology?’” in *The New (Ethno)musicologies*, ed. Henry Stobart (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 71–75.

²³ Mignolo, “Modernity and Decoloniality.”

music education. Surely there are ways to provide students with skills in close listening and analysis, while also considering that all musical articulations are performed in global space and in time.

If it could help clarify ethnomusicology's methodological domain, I would gladly abandon the "ethno-" prefix in favor of alternatives such as "sociomusicology" or "music anthropology," but I am not willing to abandon the practice of ethnography. While Amico admits to the value of fieldwork, he writes that "a fieldwork enterprise without continuous subjective *and* theoretical reflexivity . . . remains problematic" (19). I would argue that ethnomusicologists have been deeply concerned about power and representation in ethnography for at least two decades, and anthropologists for even longer, but I agree emphatically that there is much work to be done, and that ongoing "theoretical reflexivity" is essential to ethnography's ethical viability.²⁴

The crux of his argument is that ethnographic fieldwork is inherently gendered, both in terms of musical study objects and in the structure of the ethnographic relationship:

The gendered hierarchies of the discipline inhere not only in the processes whereby music coded as "authentic" (read: noncommodified = nonfeminine) is often studied largely by heterosexual, Western men, but also in the manifestation of a colonialist impulse to treat musical Others as those who are looked at, who are the object of the gaze, who submit to scrutiny and inscription in another's textual representations (rather than take part as co-creators of their own exegesis)—who are, within the realm of the symbolic logics that have structured the visual for centuries, feminized (17–18).

As someone who works and teaches on gender, this is a critique to which I am sympathetic. When teaching a graduate seminar on Gender Theory in Ethnomusicology, I too found that musicologists began publishing cutting-edge gender research before ethnomusicologists, but there is now a significant body of excellent ethnomusicological work drawing on feminist and queer theory.²⁵ The marginalization of gender issues

²⁴ Gregory Barz and Timothy Cooley, eds., *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Lila Abu-Lughod, "Writing against Culture," in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, ed. Richard G. Fox (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1991), 137–62; and Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).

²⁵ Catherine M. Appert, "Engendering Musical Ethnography," *Ethnomusicology* 61 (2017): 446–67; Carol Babiracki, "What's the Difference? Reflections on Gender and Research in Village India," in *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, ed. Gregory Barz and Timothy Cooley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 167–82; Denise Gill, "Listening, Muhabbet, and the Practice of Masculinity," *Ethnomusicology* 62 (2018): 171–205; Eileen M. Hayes, *Songs in Black and Lavender: Race, Sexual Politics,*

has been a struggle for feminist ethnomusicologists for decades, but I am hopeful, especially in the wake of the #MeToo movement, that the new research is more than a passing phase and instead represents a true reckoning within the discipline.

The first part of Amico's argument about gender is that "a perceived hyper-commodification . . . has often been coded as feminine. According to Andreas Huyssen this putatively feminine sphere was constructed in contradistinction to 'authentic' culture, seen as masculine" (16). What Amico does not say is that Huyssen is describing the late-nineteenth feminization of "mass culture" (e.g., romance novels and pulp fiction) in relation to masculinist autonomy in *modernist art and critique* (e.g., Adorno, Flaubert, and Kandinsky), and that he specifically brackets "working-class culture or residual forms of older popular or folk cultures" as not factoring into his discussion.²⁶ Huyssen argues that the rhetoric of mass culture as feminine is not timeless, but rather has faded along with the waning dominance of modernist art.²⁷

The second part of Amico's argument, put briefly, is that ethnography is gendered as male through a colonial gaze in which the Other is produced as a feminized object of scrutiny rather than as an active participant in representation. I would argue that the crisis of representation that swept anthropology in the 1980s and ethnomusicology by the 1990s was a response to exactly this issue. The conversations emerging from this crisis have been deep and ongoing; they include reflexive discussions of power and positionality, the eschewing of virtuosic fabrications of

and Women's Music (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 9–28; Eduardo Herrera, "Masculinity, Violence, and Deindividuation in Argentine Soccer Chants: The Sonic Potentials of Participatory Sounding-in-Synchrony," *Ethnomusicology* 62 (2018): 470–99; Alisha Lola Jones, "Are All the Choir Directors Gay? Black Men's Sexuality and Identity in Gospel Performance," in *Issues in African American Music: Power, Gender, Race, Representation*, ed. Portia Maulsby and Mellonee Burnim (New York: Routledge, 2014), 216–36; Ellen Koskoff, *A Feminist Ethnomusicology: Writings on Music and Gender* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014); Louise Meintjes, "Shoot the Sergeant, Shatter the Mountain: The Production of Masculinity in Zulu *Ngoma* Song and Dance in Post-Apartheid South Africa," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 13 (2004): 173–201; Joshua D. Pilzer, "Music and Dance in the Japanese Military 'Comfort Women' System: A Case Study in the Performing Arts, War, and Sexual Violence," *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 18 (2014): 1–23; Jeff Roy, "From Jalsah to Jalsā: Music, Identity, and (Gender) Transitioning at a Hijrā Rite of Initiation," *Ethnomusicology* 61 (2017): 389–418; Christina Sunardi, *Stunning Males and Powerful Females: Gender and Tradition in East Javanese Dance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015); Kay Kaufman Shelemay, "The Power of Silent Voices: Women in the Syrian Jewish Musical Tradition," in *Music and the Play of Power in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia*, ed. Laudan Nooshin (London: Ashgate, 2009), 269–88; Jane Sugarman, *Engendering Song: Singing and Subjectivity at Prespa Albanian Weddings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); and Amanda Weidman, "Gender and the Politics of Voice: Colonial Modernity and Classical Music in South India," *Cultural Anthropology* 18 (2003): 194–232.

²⁶ Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Postmodernism, Mass Culture* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), 49.

²⁷ Huyssen, *After the Great Divide*, 44–62.

“culture,” and experimental ethnographic forms based in dialogue and co-authorship.²⁸ The ethnographic modes that Renato Rosaldo called “distanced, normalizing discourse” do linger at times, but the “new ethnography” is accompanied by an erosion of classic ethnography’s patriarchal logic.²⁹ The primary modes of the new ethnography are listening, dialogue, and collaboration. At least in the American context in which I am writing, these are feminized discursive modes.

Looking Forward

I affirm Amico’s critique of the “the geo-sociocultural locations of researchers vis-à-vis their subjects/informants/consultants” and the “wildly asymmetrical structures of and access to power, privilege, capital, and representational space” (9). This is the most pressing challenge for ethnomusicology and other ethnographic disciplines. It was the source of the disciplinary crisis and renewal discussed above, which has given way to an even more urgent call for decolonization.³⁰ The erasures and exclusions of the most recent SEM conference revealed just how much work still needs to be done, but conversations in the “Crossroads Section for Difference and Representation,” the “Section on the Status of Women,” and the “Gender and Sexualities Taskforce” leave me with hope that we can do the hard work necessary to make ethnomusicology a field that does not confuse “‘representation’ with reparation” (8).

The discourses of the past and the divisions of the present do not exhaust what is possible for the future. In adopting a forward-looking orientation toward the discipline, I am guided by the work of graduate students and emerging scholars who are revolutionizing the stakes of ethnomusicology. I will end by mentioning some recent ethnomusicological work that gives me hope. Ethnomusicology began as an interdisciplinary field on the boundary between anthropology and musicology, but newer work looks toward a broader range of disciplines and theoretical apparatuses, including gender and sexuality studies,³¹ performance studies,³²

²⁸ Barz and Cooley, *Shadows in the Field*. For early critiques of culture and ethnographic norms that are required reading for ethnomusicologists, see Abu-Lughod, “Writing against Culture”; and Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth*.

²⁹ Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth*, 51.

³⁰ Barz and Cooley, *Shadows in the Field*; Stobart, *New (Ethno)musicologies*; and Svanibor Pettan and Jeff Todd Titon, eds., *De-Colonization, Heritage, & Advocacy: An Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

³¹ See note 25.

³² See, for example, Herrera, “Masculinity, Violence, and Deindividuation”; David McDonald, “Geographies of the Body: Music, Violence and Manhood in Palestine,”

border studies,³³ and critical race theory.³⁴ Applied ethnomusicology, while not new, has become invested in a new set of critical issues including but not limited to decolonization, racial justice, Indigenous rights, repatriation, and heritage work.³⁵ In more profound ways than ever before scholars are working to unsettle the colonial logics that undergird anthropology and ethnomusicology.³⁶ As argued by Jonathan Rosa and Yarimar Bonilla, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, and Deborah Wong, anthropologists and ethnomusicologists are uniquely poised to make sense of—and confront—structures of power and injustice wherever they may be, including in our everyday lives.³⁷

Cultural difference as the ground for ethnographic research now feels outdated. Scholarship is moving away from binary paradigms of Self/Other through one or more of these approaches: new perspectives on identity and subjectivity, scholars inscribing the stories of their own communities and families, and a proliferation of work on American music scenes, such as ballroom dancing in the Midwest, tango in the United States, *American Idol* reality shows, queer men in gospel music, and video game music.³⁸

Ethnomusicology Forum 19 (2010): 191–214; and Deborah Wong, “Asian American Performativities,” in *Speak It Louder: Asian Americans Making Music* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3–17.

³³ See, for example, Alex E. Chavez, *Sounds of Crossing: Music, Migration, and the Aural Poetics of Huapango Arribeño* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).

³⁴ See, for example, Fernando Orejuela and Stephanie Shonekan, eds., *Black Lives Matter and Music: Protest, Intervention, Reflection* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).

³⁵ Pettan and Titon, *De-Colonization, Heritage, & Advocacy*.

³⁶ Elizabeth Mackinlay, “Decolonization and Applied Ethnomusicology: ‘Story-ing’ the Personal-Political-Possible in Our Work,” in *De-Colonization, Heritage, & Advocacy: An Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 2, ed. Svanibor Pettan and Jeff Todd Titon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 379–97; Jonathan Rosa and Yarimar Bonilla, “Deprovincializing Trump, Decolonizing Diversity, and Unsettling Anthropology,” *American Ethnologist* 44 (2018): 201–8; and Trouillot, *Global Transformations*.

³⁷ Rosa and Bonilla, “Deprovincializing Trump”; Trouillot, *Global Transformations*; and Wong, “Ethnomusicology and Difference.”

³⁸ Jessica Swanston Baker, “Black Like Me: Caribbean tourism and the St. Kitts Music Festival,” *Ethnomusicology* 60 (2016): 263–78; Joanna Bosse, *Becoming Beautiful: Ballroom dance in the American heartland* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015); Ioanida Costache, “Reclaiming Romani-ness: Identity Politics, Universality and Otherness Or, Towards a (New) Romani Subjectivity,” *Critical Romani Studies* 1 (2018): 30–43; Kyra Gaunt, *The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes from Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Jones, “Are All the Choir Directors Gay?”; Emily McManus, “The Tango in Translation: Intertextuality, Filmic Representation, and Performing Argentine Tango in the United States,” *Transcultural: A Journal of Translation and Cultural Studies* 5 (2013): 194–213; Katherine Meizel, *Idolized: Music, Media, and Identity in American Idol* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011); Kiri Miller, *Playing Along: Digital Games, YouTube, and Virtual Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Rumya Putcha, “Between History and Historiography: The Origins of Classical Kuchipudi Dance,” *Dance Research Journal* 45 (2013): 91–110.

At a time when post-disciplinarity is used as an excuse to close departments and faculty lines in the humanities, I shudder to think how arguments like Amico's could be deployed by neoliberal universities. I would like to see a future in which music departments embrace a shared project to teach musics of the world without dividing it into West and non-West, in which method, place, and repertoire are disarticulated, and in which all music scholars work toward decoloniality and decolonization. When musicologists of every stripe are ready, this ethnomusicologist would be happy to go prefix-free.

ABSTRACT

This response defends ethnomusicology against Amico's call for its end, even as the "ethno-" prefix has already become optional in certain contexts. Addressing Amico's critiques of gender, repertoire, method, and colonialism, the response argues that ethnomusicologists are thinking creatively about the same set of issues raised by Amico and rejects the claim that abandoning ethnomusicology would repair the inequities of music scholarship and music departments. Rather than welcoming the end of ethnomusicology, the response looks toward a future in which music departments collectively embrace a decolonizing mission and discard the West/non-West binary.

Keywords: ethnomusicology, historical musicology, world music ensembles, decolonization, ethnography