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When Ellen Koskoff published the first feminist anthology in ethnomusicology, *Women and Music: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (1987), more than forty years ago, the discipline had to face its androcentric conceptions. Yet, though sharing concerns on gender and normativity, queer ethnomusicological accounts were still, until very recently, scarce and scattered amongst a variety of publications. *Queering the Field: Sounding out Ethnomusicology* is therefore the first edited volume to bring together these kind of academic accounts.

Published in 2019 by the Oxford University Press, and edited by Gregory Barz and William Cheng, *Queering the Field* is separated into eight parts. The book gathers the analyses of twenty-one different contributors, including PhD students, early-career researchers and more established scholars of various fields. It builds bridges between ethnomusicology and several of its sister disciplines, such as musicology, anthropology, and sound studies; as well as between traditional and popular music. The first apparent strength of the book lies in its ability to cover an extended variety of scholarly backgrounds.

Both the foreword and the introduction (respectively the first and second parts of the book) recall how ethnomusicology has long been shaped by heteronormative sets of rules, and a "habitus of compulsory heterosexuality" (4). Meanwhile, its sister disciplines (musicology, sociology, anthropology), represented in the following pages of the volume as well, have all made some space for queer theory within their fields of interests. Indeed, if ethnomusicology has had its feminist moments (see also Koskoff, 2014), queer perspectives are still running behind. Also echoing ethnomusicologist Deborah Wong's questions about ethnomusicology and sexuality, "How (...) do ethnomusicologists say so little about sexuality? What are the implications of erasing, ignoring, refusing, and disarticulating erotics from the musics we study?" (Wong 2015,179), Barz and Cheng engage in a queer reading of ethnomusicology and sexuality.

As an introduction, Barz suggests considering "queer" as an action verb – as it already appears in the title of the book. For Barz, "verbing"

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queer (15) means acknowledging and welcoming the sometimes paradoxical meanings that the term has come to carry throughout its history. Indeed, formerly an insult used to shame people whose gender or sexuality did not conform to hegemonic narratives, "queer" has been reclaimed by LGBT activists as a synonym of pride. Reflecting on that contrasted history, the process of "queering ethnomusicology" aims to offer the ethnographer possibilities "to revisit, reexamine, and reinterpret" the ethnomusicological fieldwork, that is: "to redirect our gaze toward the purposeful decisions we make in the field, the assumptions we carry with us, and the habits we form that cause us to make the evaluations we do,"... "to explore elasticity and acknowledge ethnomusicology's presence in the history of forming" gender and sexual categories, and "to acknowledge the complexity of embracing the existence of two (or more) ways of understanding a given scenario in our field research" (15). Invoking the theories of Judith Butler, Eve Kosofky Sedgwick and Nick Rees-Robert, amongst others, *Queering the Field* thus issues an invitation "to define the act of *doing* ethnomusicology, specifically engaging in ethnographic field research that is, if not inherently queered, then open to the queer gaze" (13). In answering that call, the volume's contributors use the attributes of queer theory to analyze self-proclaimed LGBTQ cultural productions, to investigate the social deviations from gender and sexual norms in various cultural contexts, or to question the normative forces at stake in specific ethnomusicological field research and situations.

The third unit is titled "Queer Silences" and investigates the systems of (in)visibilities that regulate queer presences in a variety of areas. In the opening chapter, Zoe C. Sherinian, questions her "outness" as a masculine-of-center, gender non-conforming, soft-butch lesbian, when doing fieldwork in India. As much as western musicology tends to impose its own categories on indigenous music styles, she addresses the impact of a western idea of universality on Indian Sex/Gender/Sexuality categories and relationships. Meanwhile, Nicol Hammond explores a white Afrikaans popular music community in post-apartheid times: Karen Zoid's fanbase. As her online fieldwork in fan communities comprised a great number of queer references, Hammond slowly came to discover how Zoid's music helped her informants deal with the repression targeting the South African lesbian community. Yet, as Zoid's music brings her fans in a virtual – and sometimes physical – proximity, making them aware of their desires, there also comes a higher risk of homophobic repression. This experience led Hammond to consider the intimacy of ethnographic fieldwork as "capable of being deeply pleasurable, deeply uncomfortable and deeply damaging" (54). Such a perspective enriches the growing amount of scholarship on

the ways in which a specific study may impact the researcher's mental health. Finally, Gillian M. Rodger considers the exploration of archives as fieldwork and offers an interesting perspective on an "ethnographic work in the past" (68). Interested in male impersonation in nineteenth-century America, she shows how her first hope to find a "nineteenth-century lesbian, or at least a feminist or non-conforming woman who operated independently of men" and her need for representation in the field she studied, was naive since terms such as lesbian or feminist weren't used in the same ways as they now are (67).

In the fourth section "Out/in the field," the topic changes to the strategies of covering, passing, or outing oneself as a queer ethnomusicologist, in academia and in fieldwork, as Barz examines the position of queer ethnomusicologists as a "marked category." Contrary to the "unmarked category" of "straight white cis male" ethnomusicologists, whose identity is always-already recognized and visible, queer ethnomusicologists may have to face the cornelian choice to out or cover themselves. Yet, looking for traces of a queer presence in ethnomusicology, Barz applies a Derridean idea to highlight the existence of queer identities "*sous rature*" (under erasure). Next, Christi-Anne Castro brings up the case of the "tomboy," a word that, in the Philippines, embodies a different meaning than in North America, overlapping with the term transgender but mainly remaining in an ambiguous gender position (111). Castro both considers "the negotiations of gender presentation and the mutual impingement of attractionality, race and class" (114) in the field and investigates how the choice of the ethnographers to "out" themselves, cover, or "pass" impacts their relationship with informants. Subsequently, Alexander M. Cannon draws on a queer phenomenology and urges "the ethnomusicologist to play in, around, and through concepts observed in the field" instead of following the "straight line" of dominant narratives (135). Recalling his ethnographical research in North American queer nightclubs and Vietnamese traditional music, he questions the methods of ethnomusicological fieldwork, their traditional sets of rules and boundaries, their constraints, and their transgression, and thereby reclaims "methodological no-nos". At last, Moshe Morad's chapter brings us to Cuba's gay *ambiente*: the festive underground spaces of Cuba's queer nightlife. As gay gatherings are not allowed in Cuba, the *ambiente* remains a profoundly underground field site, where music acts as social glue in a surveilled state. Morad's analyses explore five different spheres of the *ambiente*: fiestas de diez pesos, drag shows, bolero music, ballet performances, and Afro-Cuban religious ceremonies involving spirit possession. The diversity of the spaces described in Morad's chapter pinpoints the peculiar vivacity of Cuba's gay scene, overpassing state repression.

The fifth section, "Queerness in action", investigates and challenges academic research on queer music communities. Jeff Roy reflects on the process of ethnomusicological film making through his documentary project on Transgender Hījrā Music and Dance. Roy entered the "protected familial kinship system" (167) of the Indian trans-hījrā community and followed its members' lives through interviews and theatrical dance performances. In this chapter, he questions the presence and the impact of the researcher-videographer as reinforcing conventional boundaries between the foreigner, Western academia and his collaborators. Keen on decolonizing ethnographic queer filmmaking practices, Roy made the members of the hījrā community his collaborators at all stages of the process and thereby transformed the production process as well as the researcher-informant relationship. Matthew Leslie Santana dives into the realm of queer hip-hop and suggests that the very existence of queer rappers contradicts both the depiction of hip-hop as uniformly homophobic and the colonial idea of blackness as heteronormative. Investigating the works of Cakes Da Killa, Mykki Blanco and Princess Nokia, Santana explores how their music refers to a queer genealogy of hip-hop and to voguing or ballroom's lexicon as symbols of historical queer blackness or black queer cultures. Their representation as "gay rappers," also allows them to build coalitions, following the tradition of a queer of color critique. Next, Henry Spiller makes a salient contribution that highlights the issues of a Western queer gaze on Topeng Cirebong, a masked dance tradition from Indonesia. During a performance, each performer (the dalang topeng) embodies a variety of characters whose visual and physical mannerisms are neither coded as all feminine or all masculine. Yet, Spiller demonstrates that the characterization of dalang topeng as queer by Western scholars raise concerns as it doesn't make sense for the performers themselves, whose personal lives remain framed by the structures of heteronormativity. Finally, Tes Slominski underpins fieldworkers' "queerness" for they do not 'normally' belong to the context they observe. Thereby, she aims to encourage white, heterosexual and middle-class ethnographers to rethink their positionalities. Moreover, as queer ethnomusicologists do not often fit the norms of their hometowns and countries they should use their experiences as an invitation to think outside "belonging-not belonging" and structured binaries that are part of the traditional ethnomusicological canon.

The sixth section "Institutions and Intersections," briefly looks at the consequences of academic normativity within queer ethnomusicological research. The first chapter brings together Aileen Dillane & Nic Gareiss, respectively self-introduced as "a cis-gender female, straight(ish), White, Irish, traditional musician and American-trained ethnomusicologist" and

"a cis-gender male, queer, White, American, traditional dancer and Irish-trained ethnochoreologist" (236). The goal of this chapter is twofold. The first part brings up pertinent issues surrounding the normatively constituted ethical practices of ethnomusicology. For Dillane and Gareiss, the construction of formal guidelines provided by Research Ethics Committees reveals an "institutional anxiety around issues of queer sex and gender." The second part of their chapter proposes to "queer" the ethnomusicological project by reintroducing dance and dancers in its scope, arguing that due to its focus on the body, ethnochoreology "arguably has more deliberately engaged with sexual and gender diversity" (252). Then, in her study of the Panamanian dance-drama "La Danza Bungabita," Heather J. Paudler challenges the ideological "overgeneralization" and globalization of queer theoretical frameworks that "[fail] to acknowledge the ways in which bodies are marked and read through race- and class- specific discourses," as well (260). She warns against the institutionalization of drag performances as a "queer canon" that occults the plurality of meanings fostered by a performance.

Section seven, "Who's queer (w)here?" highlights the impact of "outness" or invisibility on researchers' mental health. Anthropologist Amber R. Clifford-Napoleone offers a reflexive chapter on her experience as a lesbian ethnographer in and out of the field and academia. She explores "dichotomies of queer and straight, anthropology and ethnomusicology, popular and academic, respectable and unrespectable, alterity and concordance" that she describes as a series of conundrums (278). Researching queer fans of heavy metal as an anthropologist necessitated her to "out" herself as both a lesbian and a metal fan and scholar. Besides being an insider in the scene she studies, she didn't expect that data collection would lead her to record the confessions of people who were struggling with their sexuality. Impacted by these encounters, she addresses her own "queer issues" of internalized homophobia and self-shaming in a truly powerful piece. Kathryn Alexander's chapter proposes an autoethnographical account of traditional dance spaces in Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. While she understands square dance coded as heteronormative, she feels like her androgynous body led her to embody both sides of the dance experience, depending on how others perceived her. Yet, this does not equate with any possibility to occupy a gender in-between, and square dancing is by no means a queer practice. More importantly, Alexander also questions the impact of fieldwork on her well-being, as refusing to flirt with male dance partners equated to losing potential informants, but accepting flirtation felt like tolerating harassing behaviors. Conclusively, Willian Cheng researches sound and voice in the male-dominated realm of first person

shooter video games. Hearing a certain amount of racist, misogynist and homophobic slurs and harassment in his field site, often deemed as harmless "locker room talk", he questions his place as a silent ethnographer in the game. Reflecting on his belief that staying silent would help him grasp the authenticity of his fieldwork, he goes further and posits a necessity to queer his fieldwork as "a call for social justice and a quest for better worlds, real and virtual" and takes the bald decision to use his voice for justice, protesting harassment and hate speech (311). Cheng thereby brings an interesting reflection on the queer ethics of ethnography.

The eighth and final section, "Clubs, bars and scenes", explores a specific type of field sites mostly connected with nightlife. First, Luis-Manuel Garcia puts his experience in dialogue with three other ethnographers of nightlife to address some of the concerns of fieldwork in queer spaces. The strategies deployed by those ethnographers often oppose the canons of ethnomusicological methods, and their stories highlight a critical "dissonance between their fieldwork sites and their disciplinary training" (335). Garcia insightfully shows how the techniques of improvisation, trial and error, and adaptation to various scenes, developed by nightlife ethnographers, are embedded in what Sedgwick's terms a "weak theory." Indeed, while a "strong theory" is defined by "its ability to bring varying and disparate fields of experience under one simple and graspable explanatory regime," to the cost of being sometimes reductive, Sedgwick's weak theory "can only account for a small range of phenomena, but it does so in great detail and with great flexibility" (351). Sarah Hankins follows with a reflection on the intersections of sex and race in her fieldwork in Tel Aviv's nightclubs. She uses psychoanalysis as a way to discover more about herself and her relation to others. In doing so, she confronts her previously unacknowledged racial anxieties while conducting ethnographic research in a Tel Aviv nightclub that was popular among African immigrant men. Hankins' reflection on her comfort in the field echoes Alexander's chapter, furthering the previous considerations with a focus on interracial relations. Through the observation of drag shows in Cuban gay bars, Cory W. Thorne then discusses the entanglement of gender, spirituality, sexuality and ethics in Cuban everyday life by looking at Santeria's religious ceremonies, amongst which many Santeros define as gays or transformistas and perform drag shows where they embody Oricha divinities. In the concluding chapter, drawing on the musicologist Suzanne Cusick's affirmation that music is sex, Peter McMurray considers sensual ethnography. McMurray asks, "What if all sound is sex?" and proposes to explore the potentiality of the body as a "queer archive of pleasure" through two case studies in Berlin nightlife (386).

As demonstrated throughout my description of the book content, the focus of the different sections sometimes seems to overlap. As chapters echo each other, queer ethnographic investigations appear to be more fluid than the section's cases. If the sexuality of the ethnographers and their informants appears to have long been a taboo in the discipline, the recounting of fieldwork experiences begins with an account of intimate or romantic relationships that the researchers were involved in while in the field. This demonstrates the entanglement of intimacy in queer ethnomusicological research practices. Being allowed, as a reader, to penetrate in such an intimate part of the authors lives, I felt entitled to write in a similar tone.

Despite the variety of topics and concerns unraveled in those pages, I found myself relating to the voices of the contributors more than once. This also highlights how questioning the heteronormativity of a discipline does not only raise concerns regarding the produced scholarship and the stories from the field. A "queer gaze" on the discipline, its methods, interests, and productions, also compels us to look at what is at play in the meetings, in the hallways, classrooms, and offices of our academic institutions. "Who's queer (w)here?", is something we should ask once again. *Queering the Field* offers interesting snapshots and analyses of this dialogue between the field and the institution. The book also highlights a necessity to further develop a reflexive scholarship on how heteronormativity and queer "outness" impact all aspects of an academic career.

Besides, as Luis-Manuel Garcia frames it when discussing nightlife fieldwork management, the "ethnographer identity impacts [the] processes of collaboration and negotiation" with informants (336). Following a similar idea, the scholarship presented in *Queering the Field* also offers a queered perspective on methodology and ethics, the ways in which one navigates the academic institutions, and how one writes about the fieldwork experience. For instance, Jeff Roy explains writing in the 1st and 2nd person to implicate himself and his readers in his stories, while Tes Slominski's piece aims to "queer the boundaries between theory, storytelling and call to action" (220). As a result, it seems as if the ethnographer identity does not only impact the fieldwork's "tricks of the trade," but also the processes of exposing the results of an ethnographic inquiry.

Yet, I would remain particularly cautious about defining ethnomusicology as a queer discipline per se. Such definition also mirrors Wong's (2014 & 2015, 179) account of ethnomusicology as a feminized discipline, i.e. a discipline often left out at the margins of music departments. And both seem particularly paradoxical. On the one hand, they may serve to highlight, as Barz frames it in the introduction, "the anxieties long harbored by ethnomusicologists, encouraging many to disavow queer theories

and avoid any direct address of queerness in their work for fear of even further marginalization in the academy" (12). But, on the other hand, presenting ethnomusicology and ethnomusicologists as queer without distinction may also contribute to the very process described in this quote. In using this analogy, we should remain careful not to turn a blind eye to the structures that specifically marginalize women and queer people in ethnomusicology (and music in general) scholarship.

Finally, as I closed the book, one question, echoing Paudler's chapter, remained with me, making me wish to further interrogate the reproduction of queer canons. If several chapters of the book addressed drag, I find essential to reflect on the prominence of such representations, which were already at the core of Butler's (2011) influential work. Also challenging the Western gaze, I consider crucial that we keep asking, in line with Paudler's observations: To what extent and how may queer ethnomusicology prevent the development of such a queer canon?

I am not sure I have yet an answer to this question and would rather leave it wide open. Yet, despite this repetitive interest for drag amongst its pages, *Queering the Field* also brings an interesting juxtaposition of topics, field sites and ways to look at and write about them. I believe that multiplying research focuses surely weakens heteronormative and queer canons. And the multiplicity of questions and concerns raised by the various contributors makes *Queering the Field* a very dense and thorough volume. One that will, without a doubt, be a foundational text for the consideration of queerness in ethnomusicology.

References

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